

# RELIGION IN LIFE

## A CHRISTIAN QUARTERLY

Vol. II

Spring Number, 1933

No. 2

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Business communications regarding subscriptions, etc., should be addressed to The Abingdon Press, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Entered as second-class matter January 16, 1932, at the post-office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. This number is the April, 1933, issue.

Subscription price, \$2.00 per year; postage free U. S. Possessions and Mexico; to Canada, 18 cents additional; other foreign postage, 30 cents; single copies, 75 cents.

Published by  
**THE ABINGDON PRESS**  
NEW YORK

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Printed in the United States of America



# An Easter Homily

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

ONE who talks to-day with thoughtful people about immortality would better have a clear idea of his meaning. The best argument for God is not an argument at all but an idea of God that is credible, and the best argument for immortality is never found by arguing but by conceiving immortality in reasonable terms. Always the strongest defense of the faith is an idea of the faith that needs the least possible defense.

Life eternal gains wide horizons in one of the New Testament's noblest sayings about it: "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." That way of putting the matter faces us with a question which goes deep into our whole working philosophy of life: Is there anything eternal in this universe and, if so, what is it?

Whether or not we are ready to agree with Paul that things unseen are eternal, we would all agree with him that, so far as their outward forms are concerned, things seen are temporal. How oppressive at times becomes the sense of life's transiency! Our poets have piled figure upon figure to express the instability and changefulness of life, its temporariness, and impermanence. So Shakespeare:

"The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind."

We do not need the poets, however, to make plain to us the transiency of life. Prosaic daily experience insistently emphasizes it. When we were young life seemed stable and secure. Down what long roads our expectations ran! But then death came into our family circle or our own physical machinery gave way and we woke up to feel how insecure is our tenure of this mortal life. What we had read in biography came home to us, that Phillips Brooks rose to the climax of his power only to have a diphtheritic sore throat quickly snuff him out, that Shelley fell to singing songs more winsome than his own Skylark's when a squall of wind off the Italian coast put a sudden end to his melody. Our individual lives are transient and insecure.

Transiency besets not simply individuals but the grouping of individuals in nations. How stable they seem at first—America, France,

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Britain—but as knowledge enlarges our historical horizons we see that nations also rise from obscurity and play for a little time their part upon the human stage and pass into obscurity again. So Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece, Rome, however strong they seemed, were like sand houses built by children on the shore, and tides of destiny, moved by a higher heaven than human hands can reach, rose up and wiped them quite away.

Indeed, transiency besets not only individuals and nations but the generations of men that fall upon this earth like gigantic snow storms, multitudinous in flakes, only to melt. Thirty-one and a half million people, we are told, die on this planet every year. Is there some reader eighty years old? Two billion, five hundred million people have died since you were born. As the years pass Martineau's great prayer becomes more significant: "O God, before whose face the generations rise and pass away!"

Even this is not the whole story. How stable the stars seem! Once we called them eternal. They are not eternal. Some of them are just being born out of whirling nebulae. Some are in their fierce and fiery youth. Some, like our own sun, are well past middle age, and some are growing old and soon will die. Transiency besets everything—ourselves, our nations, our generations, our solar systems, the stars themselves, blown like bubbles from the Infinite to float for a moment in the heavens and then disappear.

It is only against such a background as this that one can see the real significance of the Easter message. Is temporariness the last word about everything in the universe? Is it all a passing shadow-show? Well, if it is, then, as another has said, when you think of the cosmos as a whole it is little better than a cheap moving-picture film that might as well be run backward as forward, for it means nothing anyway. And if anyone says, That is a believer's way of feeling about it, take an unbeliever instead—Thomas Hardy—crying about the Creative Power behind this transient universe in which he believed,

". . . the dreaming, dark, dumb Thing  
That turns the handle of this idle Show!"

Modern Christians on Easter day are not concerned with small affairs—ancient miracle stories, childish ideas of immortality, soft and comfortable hopes of a self-indulgent and rewarding heaven. What we are driving at goes to the very center of a thoughtful man's philosophy of life. Is temporariness the last word about everything in this universe? Is there, then, nothing eternal? or, if there is, what is it?

Now, we do so inevitably tend to believe that there must be something here which lasts that the New Testament's statement is almost sure to be taken one way or the other. That is to say, if we will not agree with Paul that things seen are temporal and things unseen eternal, consider whether that denial does not mean that we propose to say the opposite—that things seen are eternal and things unseen temporal. That seems to me the alternative creed. That creed says that the physical universe goes on forever. To be sure, these present stars will pass away, but new ones will arise. These solar universes will disappear, but others will be born. Personality, however, self-conscious being with intellect, purposefulness, good will—that, they say, rises and disappears like smoke until upon an uninhabitable earth personality can be no more at all. Spiritual life, character, love, honor, devotion to beauty, passion for truth—all these things, unseen, which give to life its value—are, they say, but a slight fragrance rising from matter finely organized in human brains, and the cosmic winds will scatter it until it perishes utterly, while omnipotent matter crashes victoriously on its endless way. That is the creed which multitudes of people are tempted to accept to-day: the things that are seen are eternal, but the things unseen—spiritual life—temporal!

This serious problem concerning the eternal explains why, across the centuries, the Easter festival has gathered up its atmosphere and tradition of triumphant joy. Through endless changes of fashion in phrasing immortal hope, the good news has sounded in the church that not dirt, as the materialists think, but spiritual life is eternal. The first-century Christians said it their way. In the nineteenth century Ralph Waldo Emerson put it his way:

“ . . . What is excellent,  
As God lives, is permanent.”

Ah, my soul! if we did really believe that!—spiritual life a bank that will not break, in which a man may invest all that he has and everlastingly be assured!

As we consider this truth, think in the first place of one major reason why we are often tempted to doubt it: namely, that it is too good to be true. Sometimes we doubt things because they are too terrible to be true, but, strangely enough, there are times when we doubt things for the opposite reason.

So, in the New Testament resurrection stories about Jesus we read that once, when the living Christ was in the very presence of his disciples,

"They yet believed not for joy." That is a human note. It seemed to them, says the New Testament, too good to be true.

For the same reason many people to-day doubt eternal life. That this universe should preserve the highest it has created, that it should be true of a character like Christ, as the New Testament says, "Death no more hath dominion over him," that would be marvelous, they say, but is it not too good to be true?

"Alas for him who never sees  
The stars shine through his cypress-trees!  
Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,  
Nor looks to see the breaking day  
Across the mournful marbles play!  
Who hath not learned, in hours of faith,  
The truth to flesh and sense unknown,  
That Life is ever Lord of Death,  
And Love can never lose its own!"

Yes, they say, but is it not too good to be true?

Well, is it? Consider. Whenever we deal with the principle of the survival of the fittest the real mystery is not the survival but the arrival of the fittest. It is not so strange that when we have something fit to survive it should survive. The mystery is that it should have arrived in the first place. So spiritual life actually being here, it is not so strange that it should go on. The mystery lies at another point altogether. Go back in your imaginations a million years on this planet and try to picture then Michelangelo's art or Beethoven's music arriving. It would be too good to be true. Go back even to the Stone Age and try to imagine then Plato's brain or Christ's character arriving. It would be too good to be true. The real mystery is not the survival of the fittest but its arrival, and the gist of the Easter problem is simply this: Will the universe that thus has produced glorious spiritual life hug to itself its lowest and throw its best away?

In a world where spiritual life has actually managed to arrive, it is a small addition to the mystery to suppose that it will survive.

To be sure, one cannot argue himself into this. Such convictions come not mainly from the balancing of arguments but from the appreciation of values. Suppose you had a palatial house and that through its halls and up its stairs and around its galleries there ran a child, your child, and suppose that a catastrophic fire befell in such fashion that you had to choose whether to preserve your house or your child. If you chose to keep the house and let the child go we should all know what to think of you—as

insane as you were wicked and as wicked as you were insane. So the question at stake on Easter morning is the essential nature of the universe. Does it keep its house and let the children go? cling to matter and care nothing about spirit? hug dirt and throw soul away?

So put, as you see, eternal life means something infinitely more than a mere post-mortem question about what happens to you and me as individuals after death. Frankly, I think that that by itself is trivial. The question at stake is the essential nature of the cosmos in which we are living to-day. Either things seen are temporal and things unseen are eternal or else the opposite is true, and what a man thinks about that colors the quality and temper of his living.

To suppose that spiritual life in ourselves, and finally in the whole race, upon an uninhabitable earth runs out like a river into the desert of a merely materialistic world and dries up—that does one thing to a man's life, to its tone, temper, and quality. And something else altogether comes into life when one shares Robert Browning's confidence:

"All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist;  
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power  
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist  
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour."

Look at our truth from another angle and consider how this approach to eternal life lifts our thought of immortality out of the meanness and egotism that so often have afflicted it into the dignity of a great faith.

Ever and again some people say, "It must be dreadful not to believe in immortality." That depends on what you mean. Here is Mr. Einstein, for example, thinking of the narrow, individualistic conception of immortality, saying frankly that it seems to him "ridiculously egotistical." As a Christian minister, I wish to take my stand alongside Mr. Einstein on that point. Nothing has done more harm to faith in immortality than the small and egotistical selfishness commonly associated with it, as though in this immense and amazing cosmos the main matter at issue were that I, John Smith, must somehow go on living with myself, John Smith, much as I am now, for ever and ever. So far from being credible, that seems to me so horrible a fate that, when one lets one's imagination play about it, it is intolerable.

Remember what George Bernard Shaw said: "After all, what man is capable of the insane self-conceit of believing that an eternity of himself would be tolerable even to himself?" Let your imagination play over the

idea and see if a narrow egotism applied to immortality does not ruin that as it ruins everything else. But suppose we meant by eternal life what the greatest souls commonly have meant. Suppose we were interested mainly not in our little selves but in spiritual life and the endless possibilities of creative goodness, beauty, and truth. Suppose that we were confident that this universe would not in the end cling to its lowest and throw its highest away. Suppose we saw, too, that spiritual life is always associated with personal life, is, indeed, a function of personality, so that the fortunes of spiritual life and the fortunes of personal life are always tied up together. And suppose that by that highroad we came to a strong conviction that in the universe where spiritual life is eternal, personal life must have high destinies, but destinies so high that they are immeasurably beyond our power to imagine and must mean something infinitely more than the mere perpetuity in time of a little limited ego. That would be a great faith. And the first effect of that high faith is to make the future an inspiring adventure into the unknown and unimaginable possibilities of spiritual life.

Recall Peter Pan on that rock in the lagoon, when the waters were rising all about him and drowning seemed inevitable. "To die," said brave Peter, "to die will be an awfully big adventure." Just so!

How much that note is needed now! On every side people suggest that faith in immortality is merely weak comfort for feeble folk. Upon the contrary, when I am weak I care least of all about immortality. Like travelers in the Arctic snow, wearied with the toil and cold and wanting nothing half so much as to lie down and go to sleep and never wake up, so are we when we are weak. In our feeble hours we would say with Swinburne:

"From too much love of living,  
From hope and fear set free,  
We thank with brief thanksgiving  
Whatever gods may be,  
That no life lives forever;  
That dead men rise up never;  
That even the weariest river  
Winds somewhere safe to sea."

That is our mood when we are weak. When the archæologists first began uncovering the cemeteries of ancient Rome, on numberless tombs they found seven letters: N. F. F. N. S. N. C. These letters stood for an old inscription grown so familiar that men no longer troubled to write it out; they put the initials there. And these are the Latin words for which



the letters stood: "*Non Fui, Fui, Non Sum, Non Curo.*" And this is the translation: "I Was Not. I Was. I Am Not. I Do Not Care." So sons buried their fathers and fathers their sons; so wives interred husbands and husbands interred wives; and over multitudinous graves stood this skeptical, cynical summary of life: "I Was Not. I Was. I Am Not. I Do Not Care."

That is not a mood of strength. That is the mood of the fatigued, the wearied, the tired. It is when a man rises into confidence in the endless possibilities of spiritual life that he has a strong faith. "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. . . . Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord." That is a strong man's faith. As Lotze, the philosopher, argued, cosmos cannot have chaos for its crown. It is a strong man's faith. A hundred years ago Goethe died and as he passed through the mysterious portals, they say, he cried, "More light." That is a strong man's faith.

Some folk wonder how intelligent people can believe the egoistic conceptions of immortality that like all cheap things are current in the population. So do I. But never give up a great matter because it can be caricatured. This universe will not throw away its best and keep its worst, and so Peter Pan was right: death will be an awfully big adventure.

This, then, is the practical conclusion of the matter. If spiritual life is eternal, invest in it now. Now is the time to begin eternal life. All the eternity that you and I ever will deserve or can expect to have must come from the incarnation in our lives of the eternal. Now is the time to invest ourselves to the hilt in those causes of beauty and truth and goodness which are timeless. As the New Testament says, "He that hath the Son hath the life."

People say that we cannot imagine or picture immortality. They are right. Waste no time on charlatans who claim they can. People say that we cannot demonstrate immortality. They are right. Demonstration, strictly speaking, involves verification, and in the nature of the case that is impossible now. Neither immortality nor its opposite can in a scientific sense be proved. People say, Let us live to the full now and not worry too much about immortality. So say I. Goethe, who hoped so deeply for immortality that he said once, "Those are dead even for this life who hope for no other," said to his friend Eckermann: "An able man, who has something regular to do here, and must toil and struggle and produce day



by day, leaves the future world to itself, and is active and useful in this." So say I.

But underneath and overhead and through this present life, like sunshine which one does not always think of but which is here, runs a strong conviction that vivifies and illumines and dignifies everything, that spiritual life is eternal and that ahead of it the doors are open. That is all we need to know, that ahead the doors are open. Sure of that, I do not ask to see the future scene; one step enough for me. Says the New Testament about our Lord, "Death no more hath dominion over him." Indeed, it has not. For there was in him that over which death never can have dominion—spiritual life.

# The Modern Pulpit and the Preaching of the Word

WILBERT F. HOWARD

“LET Glasgow flourish!” is the motto beneath the arms of the second city of Great Britain. But once upon a time the motto of that city was both longer and nobler. “Let Glasgow flourish by the preaching of the word!” In like manner there are many in our day who can shout with whole-hearted allegiance *Floreat Ecclesia!* but who would hesitate to add *Verbi prædicatione*. Yet that is the confidence which has inspired the Church in every period of broadest and deepest popular influence, in the days of Paul, of Ambrose, of Chrysostom, of Wyclif, of Savonarola, of Luther, of Knox, of Rutherford, of Wesley and Whitefield, of Newman, of Spurgeon, of Lidden, of Bushnell, of Phillips Brooks, of Maclaren, of Dale. In so far as evangelical Christianity is failing to hold the attention of the world this is due in great measure to its failure to proclaim the word of God. Of course it may be urged that the Church has lost the respect of the world because of lack of moral courage, or because of the gulf that yawns between precept and practice. That is only another way of saying that the divine message of redemption has been heard with the hearing of the ear, but has not yet entered the heart and taken strong possession of the life. Christian preaching is not repetition, it is revelation. “When it was the good pleasure of God, who called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me”—then came an interval of silence followed by the energy of utterance. Character, conduct, knowledge, experience—all are determined by the arresting and compelling word of God. “I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus.” This is what Karl Barth means when he says that the preacher must take the Word of God seriously, not bending the text to himself, but bending before the text, waiting upon it until God speak through it truths that “take hold upon him like an armed man.”

Yet no one can say that the preaching of the Word in any such commanding sense is the keynote of the modern pulpit, or even that it is expected so to be.

## I

A lessened emphasis upon *preaching* may be traced to two causes of an entirely different character. It is sometimes claimed that this is due to a

revived sense of proportion in worship. The architecture of many of our modern churches bears witness to a wholesome reaction from the ugly style of building in which the pulpit was the center, to which all else was plainly subordinate. It was in harmony with this tradition to disparage praise and prayer under the comprehensive epithet "the preliminaries." We may well rejoice that in our day the Churches both of the Methodist and of the Puritan tradition are giving more heed than ever before to the cultivation of the spirit of devotion in public worship. We do well to remember the holiness of beauty as well as the beauty of holiness.

The other cause generally assigned for the decline of preaching is that the minister himself is submerged in the multitudinous distractions of practical administration. This is only another way of confessing that the Church is failing to make a right use of the wealth of consecrated devotion which God has given to us in the laity of Christendom. The primitive Church liberated the apostles from the service of tables that they might "continue steadfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word." An apostolic ministry will not attempt to run the Church as a business concern.

We are concerned, however, not so much with the importance of preaching, as with the preaching of *the word of God*. A glance at the advertisements in a Saturday evening paper does not suggest to the reader that no lime-light in these days is turned upon the preacher. Our reflection is rather that the light that is in him is darkness. The doom of the Church is already pronounced when the preacher of the word of God has abandoned his vocation to become an amateur psychiatrist, a pleasant commentator on the news of the week, an exponent of contemporary humanism, a literary essayist, a well-meaning sociologist, a quack economist, or, worst of all, a public entertainer. There is no room for the dabbler anywhere. There is full scope elsewhere for the man who is trained to deal with the diseases of mind and body, whether of the individual or of the body politic. But the pulpit is not his place. The preacher's main concern is to declare the inexhaustible riches of Christ. The experience of the redeemed society throughout the centuries is the peculiar treasure of the Christian Church. The living and awakening work of God, speaking to man through the scriptures and the fellowship of believers, has results in the quickened conscience and the illumined mind which will reach from the center at the cross to the outermost circumference of the social relationships of the nation and of the world. We are not pleading for a reactionary theology or for a restricted gospel. Our urgent appeal is that we should start from the center and work outwards, and not look vainly for our inspiration in the periphery

regions of applied Christianity. The danger is that there should be no Christianity to apply.

It will scarcely be denied that there is a wide-spread tendency to avoid the great themes which have always formed the central message of the Church. We may find help in coming to closer grips with the problem by considering four of the causes for this centrifugal tendency.

(a) Ignorance of the Bible is probably one of the main reasons for ignoring the Bible in the pulpit. The evidence of Doctor S. Parkes Cadman cannot be lightly set aside. He attributes the failure of the ministry of the present day to discuss scriptural subjects to a lack of knowledge in this field: "A great deal of the cant to-day from Protestant pulpits is not only an abuse of liberty but a following of the line of least resistance. The ministry is bound to follow other things besides scriptural matters to make up for what they don't know. There is a poverty of the present pulpit even in its greatest spheres." Lest this should seem like an Englishman's haste to quote an American against America, let us quote from a recent leader in the *Church Times* (Oct. 21, 1932) under the caption "Scriptureless Priests." Now for a generation past it has been commonly claimed by Anglicans that, even though Free Church ministers may know a great deal more about the Bible than the clergy of the Established Church, at any rate the clergyman knows the actual words of the Bible better than his Nonconformist rival. This gives a peculiar significance to the statement by this influential London journal that "it must be seriously questioned whether the modern ordinand knows his Bible." "Nowhere is there any certainty that a boy, from whatever social class he springs, will have any acquaintance, let alone an adequate acquaintance, with Holy Writ. He arrives at the Theological College with a Bible in his bag which, if the publishers did not cut the leaves, might hardly have received any such attention." The remedy for this must be considered later.

(b) Behind this ignorance of the Bible on the preacher's part lies a state of mind which is shared alike by pulpit and pew. There are to-day universal misgivings about the Bible. Time was when the Holy Scriptures were not only the background of all Christian thought but even the final court of theological appeal. But the infallibilities have all gone. The ordinary man, whether a pillar of his local church or a casual listener in the pew, has an idea that the Bible has been seriously discredited. He knows little or nothing about the principles of biblical criticism and is not interested in them. But he does know that it has been dethroned from its place of unique authority. From the standpoint of psychological attack the

preacher feels that it is not wise to make very much use of either Old or New Testament if he wants to gain the attention and consent of his audience. Perhaps there is a more subtle influence at work in the subconscious depths of the preacher's own mind. Can he honestly appeal to the Bible as having any authority for him? He is not a fundamentalist, neither is he blind to the rare beauty of many passages from Genesis to Revelation. He has passed through all the processes of the scientific approach to the several books, and still believes that the Bible occupies the first place in the religious literature of the world. But he has an uneasy sense that his critical knowledge has robbed the Book of its sacred dominion in his life. Possibly for a while he found temporary satisfaction in Doctor H. E. Fosdick's "new solution" that "the modern preacher's responsibility is to decode the abiding meanings of Scripture from outgrown phraseology." Then, after reading Walter Lippmann's *A Preface to Morals*, he feels that even that precarious foothold has been swept from beneath him by the all-devouring flood. "The Bible," writes Lippmann, "as men formerly accepted it, contained wisdom *certified* by the powers that govern the universe. It did not merely contain many well-attested truths, similar in kind to those which are to be found in Plato, Aristotle, Montaigne, and Bernard Shaw. It contained truths which could not be doubted because they had been spoken by God through his prophets and his Son. They could not be wrong. But once it is allowed that each man may select from the Bible as he sees fit, judging each passage by his own notions of what is 'abiding,' you have stripped the Scriptures of their authority to command men's confidence, and to compel their obedience. The Scriptures may still inspire respect. But they are disarmed." Is it any wonder that thousands of young theological students and ministers in Germany, England, Scotland and America, who are in no sense blind followers of the Barthian theology, having felt the impotence of the disarmed Scriptures, are listening with a quickened attention to those who bid them bend before the text, waiting upon it, until they hear God speaking through it, until its truths "take hold upon them like an armed man"? The significant fact is that many have not listened in vain. Yet they have not surrendered their critical conscience in the quest for truth.

(c) Preoccupation with psychology is accountable for much of the prevalent neglect of the Bible in preaching. The value of psychology as an important element in the training of the ministry is too obvious to need any defense. Indeed, a sound discipline in the principles of normal psychology would probably save us from many of the crudities which are due

to the too facile investigation of the unsavory surprises which mental pathologists have dredged from the dark depths of disordered minds. Be this as it may, we live in an age in which it is unfashionable to speak of men's sins, but not to analyze their complexes. The spread of Mrs. Eddy's cult and the far-reaching effect of nervous strain in the post-war generation invite the preacher to attract a ready hearing by concentrating attention upon the moods of the soul, upon the beneficent results of the well-ordered and self-regulated mental life, and upon the relation between genial spirituality and a sound nervous system. Of course there is much to be said in favor of all this. The preposterous absurdities of Eddyism would have given Christian Science no chance if the Christian pulpit had always allowed due emphasis to the teaching of our Lord and of his apostle upon the cure of worry by the life of continual trust. The pendulum has now swung so far the other way that states of mind come before the will of God, the dangers of repression loom larger than the perils of the undisciplined will, and the problems of sex are removed from the realm of religion to the sphere of sociology. Let there be no misunderstanding upon the point. The Christian pulpit is concerned with all these things. The minister must say, in the words of the Roman poet, *Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto*. But in the pulpit he has to deal with them on the God-ward side. The special contribution which he has to offer is that revelation of God supremely given to man in Jesus Christ, in the light of which human instincts are translated into the kingdom of the Son of God's love. It is in the New Testament that we find the chief records of the Incarnate Life of unswerving obedience to the divine will, and the first expression of the transforming experience of the Spirit of Christ in the creative life of the Christian fellowship.

(d) In the fourth place we may mention the escape from the historical as a cause for the disparagement of biblical preaching. Historical records are so fragmentary and so uncertain that many a religious thinker seeks refuge in an approach to the religious consciousness which is independent of Hebrew and Christian documents. He tries to find the timeless values of Christianity in a form which can be detached from events in time. The most deadly peril through which the Church ever safely passed was the Gnostic phase of thought in the second century. Theosophy in its more extravagantly eclectic brand is in no danger of capturing the Christian Church to-day, but we are by no means free from popular modes of thought which offer as the Gospel a vague ethic of uncertain Christian origin embodied in a socio-political creed. It must have been an acute distress set



up by this sort of shrill but futile propaganda that led a writer in America (of international repute) to protest on the part of "those of us who still believe that the Christian religion is not to be identified with a thin, acrid kind of socialism, plus a vague affability, plus a dose of imported 'mysticism' (save the mark) from creatures like Gandhi and Tagore." One may have the deepest respect for the great Indian poet, and for the unselfish devotion of the Indian patriot. But however astute and successful may be the well-staged political activities of Mr. Gandhi, the much admired "soul-force" of this remarkable politician is simply incommensurable with the spiritual power that flows from Jesus Christ. The one safeguard against this spurious identification is a constant return to the New Testament. After all, Christianity is a historic religion. Its sources are found in a revelation of God in history. Whatever historical problems relating to the life of Jesus and the events which followed his crucifixion may remain insoluble, all that we know about his life and his teaching, his character and the abiding influence which formed his followers into the Christian Church, is found within the pages of the New Testament.

## II

But all this time the reader may be patiently suppressing an indignant feeling that the writer's plea is based upon an antiquated assumption that there is some unique virtue in biblical religion. Definitions of scriptural inspiration that were once current have now lost their validity, and the kind of authority which was once claimed for "the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible" has passed away never to return. But these unsatisfactory definitions and doctrines were merely attempts to account for the incomparable effect produced by the message contained in this literature. It is the religious literature of a nation which culminates in a supreme personality, of a fellowship which is founded upon and sustained by communion with that Person. It has been said that the strongest blow ever struck at Christianity is Lessing's famous dictum that "contingent historical truths can never become proof of necessary truths of reason." To this no better reply has been given than that of Professor H. R. Mackintosh, who shows that no man is a mere historian, for he also possesses a conscience, and may at any time find himself in the presence "of One who deals with us in ways which we know to be God's ways. It may happen to any man, at any time, given the witness of a living Church, to be inescapably confronted with a Person who convicts him of moral ruin yet offers him the saving love of God. And if this should happen, he will then know, with a



certainly that no history can give or take away, that in this Jesus he has touched and met with God." It is perhaps some dim perception of the stupendous possibilities of contact with this Person, who belongs to history yet refuses to be buried in history, that accounts for the amazing interest shown in the Gospel narratives. Books about Jesus stream incessantly from the press. Nevertheless we shall never understand why the Gospels ever came to be written unless we also study the rest of the New Testament. There would never have been any interest in the earthly life and conversation of Jesus if the preaching of his cross and resurrection had not brought into life whole communities of men whose changed lives were proving that the Spirit of Christ was a creative fact of divine significance. It is in the Epistles that we find a new spiritual consciousness pervading and controlling not only the moral life of the individual, but the complex relationships of the social order. The New Testament contains what is vital to our understanding of the new spiritual force that had emerged on the plane of history and has continued ever since to bring to men moral illumination and regenerative power. In that essay on "History and the Gospel" (*Some Aspects of Christian Belief*, ch. i) which has already been quoted, Doctor Mackintosh goes on to say that "to have found Jesus in history, and to have become assured that in him we encounter God himself, are experiences which cannot fail to modify very profoundly our views of history as such." One consequence of this has an important bearing upon our theme, though it lay outside the scope of that most valuable essay. Jesus was a Jew by birth and religious nurture, and we can neither understand him nor explain his message without recognizing the activity of God in the history of the Jewish nation. The grand conceptions which stand out before the eyes of those who read the Old Testament are not chance products of ethnic evolution. "When the fulness of the time was come God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law." In that *præparatio evangelica* we are entitled to include the genius of governments by which the Romans unified the world, and the intellectual genius by which the Greeks taught the world to think. But in religion the Hebrew genius is supreme.

The preacher's concern with the Old Testament, however, is something far more than an introductory study to the New Testament. Here too "deep calleth unto deep." Here as nowhere else the sublime majesty of God evokes a sense of awe, that reverent humility before the mystery of the divine holiness without which there can be no true religion. But if "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," it is not the end. The prophetic insistence upon ethical monotheism creates a moral demand in

the worshiper. Human righteousness is the correlative of divine holiness. In the Old Testament "History is prophecy teaching by example." In the Psalter we hear every accent and cadence of the voice of the soul in all its moods of wonder and worship, of pain and perplexity, of penitence and peace. The element of human tragedy, of man's desperate need of God, and of the answering voice that brings comfort and trust even though the baffling enigma of life remains unsolved, surges through the heart as the drama of Job is unfolded. Surely as a textbook of religion the Bible is without a rival! For its call throughout is to religion in life.

### III

What must we do then to set the Bible in its rightful place in the Church?

(a) First we must acknowledge gratefully and encourage in every possible way what is already being done outside the official activities of the Church. Never in Christian history has so much been written as during the last generation to throw light upon the Bible, and to bring its literature within the sphere of general interest for those who read at all. The work of such men as the late Professor R. G. Moulton, of Chicago University, has given to educated readers a new sense of the literary beauty and the varied structure of the several parts of the Old Testament. The New Testament has been rendered afresh into the idiom of to-day by such scholars as Weymouth, Moffatt and Goodspeed. The best resources of biblical scholarship have been made available in simplest and most readable form for the elementary student in such one-volume commentaries as *Peake's* and the *Abingdon*. Popular introductions whose name is legion are at the disposal of the simplest reader. Is it too much to urge that such literature should be on view in the institute attached to every church, and that lectures should be given as part of the regular winter program to foster the eager and intelligent study of the Bible?

(b) The present century has seen a marvelous revolution in the method and equipment of Church Schools. No praise is too high for the skill and understanding of the child's mind which the graded school represents. Moreover, in America, on the campus of almost every theological seminary or divinity school there is now to be found a well-staffed and liberally endowed School of Religious Education. This would seem to suggest that a constant stream of men and women is flowing into the ordinary channels of religious teaching, and that these are fitted not only by personal interest but also by special training to guide the young in biblical knowledge. Is

it rank heresy to whisper the misgiving that sometimes the "technique" of religious education takes precedence over the subject matter of that which is to be taught? Indeed would any great harm be done if the curriculum in some of these excellent schools were somewhat narrowed to allow a thorough course of biblical study to take the place of paramount interest?

(c) So far we have been thinking under this heading of those who sit in the congregation. For the preacher is partly shaped by the dominant interests of the pew. But what are we to say about the man who is preparing for the Christian ministry? If the man who is offering himself as a candidate for the Christian ministry is in anything like the parlous plight indicated by the writer in the *Church Times* who has already been quoted, a grave responsibility rests upon the theological colleges and divinity schools. The widening interests of the ministry have been accompanied by necessary modifications in the curriculum of theological and ministerial training. But in England the main emphasis still rests upon the fundamental discipline in the Old and New Testaments, the History of Doctrine and of the Church, Systematic Theology (that is the correlation of all the data of religious knowledge into a unitary and consistent whole) and the Philosophy of Religion. If in America there is something more than a perceptible tendency to crowd out solid biblical study in order to find room for subjects which are alleged to have a greater practical utility, the result will inevitably reveal itself in the character of the ministry of the pulpit. A good bedside manner and skill in accountancy may be valuable assets to a doctor, but they are no substitutes for a sound training in physiology and anatomy. The key to a revival of clear, direct, well-informed preaching of biblical religion is in the hands of those who are responsible for the curriculum of the schools of the prophets.

#### IV

All that has been said in the last section touches but the fringe of the problem. The heart of the matter belongs to the minister himself. No man can awaken in others an interest in the tremendous truths which speak to us from the Bible unless he has himself come under their sway. How many who read those four epoch-making volumes by George Adam Smith on *Isaiah* and the *Twelve Prophets* remember that they consist of sermons preached to a church crowded with young men? It may be replied that a genius was in the pulpit and the audience was composed of Scotsmen, and Aberdonians at that! But what a mastery of the text lies behind those sermons! What an eager attention to the voice of prophecy! What a pas-

sionate application to the present needs of the hearer! Think of that terrific sermon on "Babylon," and then repeat, if you can, the complaint that expository preaching is necessarily tedious and dry-as-dust! Read again that sermon on the "Rekindling of the Civic Conscience" and you will not again fall into the snare of supposing that the preaching of the word of God is unrelated to current needs. It would be a thesis worthy of a competent scholar to maintain that the revival of the Christian social conscience in British Nonconformity was largely caused by the rediscovery of the message of the great prophets of the eighth century before Christ.

But there is a severer test to which the preacher must submit than even to renew the prophetic appeal for social righteousness as an outcome of obedience to the will of a holy God. The natural man does not shrink from an appeal to the heroic, and in his deepest soul he has an unerring respect for justice. The most distinct demand of the Christian Gospel, that which separates it from all else, is the insistence upon the doctrines of grace. All human pride revolts from the amazing assertion that the way of salvation is not by meritorious human effort. The word of the cross is still to the humanist in our midst sheer folly, and to the enterprising man of business a stumbling block. The preacher's final ordeal is not with Amos, and Isaiah and Micah, but with Paul. Yet if he sits down to wrestle with the intractable message of the Epistle to the Romans, and avails himself of that latest marvel of expository illumination, the recent commentary by Professor C. H. Dodd, he will find that, when he has got beyond the idiom and the illustrations of a remote era to the central thoughts, he is asking the same questions to-day that were answered then in the heart of an inspired preacher. The modern preacher could find no worthier aim than to take the apostolic word of the cross and translate it into his own vernacular, using all his resources of illustration, of reasoning and of appeal, to bring this distinctive and timeless message home to his own contemporaries.

Just twenty-five years have now passed since Principal P. T. Forsyth gave his memorable lectures at Yale on Positive Preaching and Modern Mind. All that has happened since then has but underlined the urgency of his call. In his closing lecture he used these words: "There is something lacking to our preaching, by general consent. It lacks the note, the energy of spiritual profundity and poignancy as distinct from spiritual sympathy, and of moral majesty as distinct from ethical interest." Every man who recovers in his preaching that lost note is helping the Church to regain its most powerful weapon in the *militia Christi*—the preaching of the Word. For the sword of the Spirit is still the word of God.

# The World's Youth and "Re-thinking Missions"

BASIL MATHEWS

## I

**A**LREADY scores of estimates of *Re-thinking Missions* have been written by theologians and missionary administrators, by novelists and publicists living in the Far East, by college presidents and leaders of student movements. There is only one angle from which the present writer, who has none of these qualifications, can properly attempt an interpretation. It is that of one who has been drawn at two decisive hours in his life from attractive avenues of secular literary work by the conviction that the focal center on which the future of man's life depends to-day is the decisive release of the Christian message in compelling word and life to the youth of all nations. In a word, the point of view here taken is the educational interpretation to youth of Christianity and in particular of its revolutionary leavening of life. In a world of baffled, confused, and lonely lives, hurrying to quench their thirst at mirages in the desert of materialism, there is a well of living water. How can youth find paths to that well so they may draw the water and drink? It is from the point of view of that passionate pre-occupation that this approach to *Re-thinking Missions* is attempted.

I managed to secure one of the few copies of the book that had reached England this January when we were sailing to the United States. I took pains to secure it, not on account of any interest in the book that had arisen in England then, for it had then barely raised a ripple. Two or three letters from North America, however, had shown that, whether from the point of view of discussion or—and more important—from the point of view of facing some hundreds of students as a professor in an American university through fourteen weeks on the issues raised by the report, it was essential to read it. I did so carefully.

The first reaction was of bewilderment as to why such a book should create (as I was told it had done) intense discussion from the Atlantic to the Pacific across the continent of North America. The first four chapters, while they contain sentences defining the differences of Christian conviction entertained by the different members of the commission, on the whole reflect a familiar theological and philosophical approach to Christianity that had certainly aroused a similarly vehement discussion in Britain just



at the time when I went down from the university into Fleet Street journalism rather more than a quarter of a century ago. It never held even transient sway over more than a small group in Britain and has not been discussed there for two decades. Other convictions hold sway with most of the younger men—convictions that are felt to be rooted in a more realistic view of human nature, and in a view of the person of Christ more congruous at once with contemporary recent research into the sources behind the New Testament and with the continuous experience of the Christian community, as well as with the present approach of philosophy to personality. It was difficult, then, for me to see why these first four chapters should arouse so intense an interest.

What does awaken enthusiastic response in the writer, from the point of view of interpretation to youth, is the emphasis in these first four chapters on the marvelously simple, untechnical, concrete reality of the Good News in Jesus Christ; and the call to give to Asia, not our metaphysical or dogmatic rationalizations, nor our ecclesiastical crystallizations, but the essential leaven itself, in word and life. The call to fellowship with men of other faiths which "Jerusalem" sounded is here re-emphasized with compelling eloquence.

When passing from these first four chapters to the others, I came to long sequences of definite recommendations. They, generally speaking, aroused a feeling of agreement, but not of vivid interest. Most of them I had seen repeatedly in the reports of educational commissions like those headed by Doctor Burton and the Master of Balliol, and in particular in the eight volumes of the Jerusalem Council report. There are seven major issues on which *Re-thinking Missions* is in warm accord with the agreed "Jerusalem" policies. They are (a) fellowship with other faiths, (b) naturalization of the Church, (c) concentration, (d) drastic reduction of rural subsidies, (e) the co-ordination of all sides of the whole to community service, (f) sweeping administrative co-operation, and (g) raising the level of personnel. That is common ground enough, surely. But here we find, again, the superlative value of this report. It takes from the shelves convictions buried in too voluminous documents and shouts them in the market places, debates them in the classroom, unfolds them in the club, gives them common currency. That is a wonderful thing to have done.

There was a sharp feeling of disappointment as I went on to reading the chapter on the "Mission and the Church." Partly, I confess, from a sense of weariness that it went over the old things that we have been repeating for so long, without, so far as I could discover, any fresh constructive

driving initiative; and, secondly, because it ignores (I dare not believe is ignorant) of the radical, concrete church problems, administrative and confessional, that many of the best and most devoted minds in the world are striving to solve. On this subject and on education as well as on industry there are pages in the Jerusalem reports that leave *Re-thinking Missions* far behind, not only chronologically, but in sheer masterly, pungent, balanced statement of radical revolutionary leadership. But there is the educational problem; they are buried in the series of Jerusalem volumes.

Again, the criticism that the commissioners level against the personnel of missions (which they repeated in the discussions at the great Roosevelt Hotel meeting where missionary leadership from all over the U. S. A. came together) must have in it some tragic element of truth, or they would not have had the sheer grit to repeat so painful and pain-giving a generalization. The main criticism is not true of the large majority of missionaries whom I have come to know personally in the last twenty years. I suppose, however, that an "appraisal" of the Twelve, from what we know of them in the Gospels, could have emphasized that "limited outlook" which troubled their Master so deeply. Whether the report is just to the missionary personnel or not, it does remain true that we need an ever higher standard of missionaries. The difficulty is that we want—if we are going to touch the industrial and rural masses—not only the best men and women who are now in the universities, but also successors to Moffat the gardener, Livingstone the factory boy, and Carey the cobbler. We need adjustable, large-hearted men and women ready, if called, to serve under Asiatic leadership and humble enough to keep growing all the time. And for those gifts intelligence tests and even character tests have proved to be singularly futile touchstones.

The aim that seems to me vital in relation to educating the youth of to-morrow, as we read this document *Re-thinking Missions*, is not to be drastically critical or grimly on the defensive. Objective analysis is needed there. But it is vital to take the constructive guidance that the book does offer and use it adventurously. Guidance can be found in every chapter. There is no question that the enterprise would be raised to an incalculably higher level if the societies' boards came into more intimate spiritual fellowship with one another, and put their relatively depleted resources into united co-operative action. The more careful selection and more intensive training of candidates for missionary service is an unquestioned need. A trenchant emphasis on the temporary character of many of the foreign elements in mission work may be of inestimable value if it



drives us to more positive, inventive adventure toward the permanent functions of missions; and above all, toward throwing on the indigenous leadership the tasks it is bound to shoulder. In all these issues I find *Re-thinking Missions* stimulating to students in America; and they enjoy getting a clearer perspective by taking these positive proposals and setting them in relation to the corresponding elements in the Jerusalem "Findings," in Mott's *Presentday Summons*; in the Lindsay and Burton Reports, and so on.

## II

*Re-thinking Missions* has, then, created the most magnificent opportunity for the missionary education of youth that has been seen in North America during this century. Indeed, it may be questioned whether since the launching of the modern Protestant missionary enterprise the atmosphere has been so electric with interest in these great fundamental issues, through such vast and varied ranges of population.

Generally speaking the ordinary business or professional man, or the average student to whom the subject of missions or of the true character of Christianity was broached, might be polite, but prepared to be bored. To-day either subject makes men sit forward eagerly and put radical questions to anyone from whom they have any gleam of hope of getting any real light. Will this intense interest prove, at the end of the day, to mark the beginning of a new era for Western Christianity in general and for the missionary enterprise in particular, or will it issue in a tragic period of confusion, uncertainty, and division? That depends more than on any other single factor on whether the Christian ministry, the leaders of student life, laymen and women and teachers go in through this freshly opened door, and in a constructive, living, and human way carry forward a sustained piece of irenic educational work, at once from the pulpit and the platform, in the classroom, and in group discussion.

To let that opportunity pass would be not simply a negative loss. It would spell positive disaster. And this for at least two reasons. First, we recall, the vivid interest was aroused, in the first instance, through the release in the secular daily press of statements that threw into sharp and even sensational relief what looked like authoritative pronouncements against the uniqueness and adequacy of Christianity, and against both the policy and the personnel of the present world mission of Christianity to the Orient. As a result the rank and file of newspaper headline readers have received a sharply critical impression about Christianity and missions.

Those swift and general impressions were far from representing the perspective of the book *Re-thinking Missions*; still less of the minds of the group responsible for that book. But they have gained a nationwide currency, and are the primary causes for the intense interest in the subject.

My own principal opportunity in North America of directly testing that interest in a pragmatic way has been with four groups of students totaling somewhat over two hundred with whom I am spending some one hundred and forty hours of class work during this spring semester. Many of these students are under severe economic pressure and are earning their living as they go along. But all of them have bought *Re-thinking Missions* and alongside it Doctor Mott's *Presentday Summons to the World Mission of Christianity* in the cheap edition specially issued for students' use.

The fact that they have responded to the proposal to buy Doctor Mott's book alongside the other is an index of one's estimate of *Re-thinking Missions* itself. As a challenging, thought-provoking stimulus, it is of unique value. It is, so to speak, an ideal electric starter; but you cannot drive a car on the electric starter. Or, to alter the metaphor, anyone whose knowledge of missions and estimate of their value is arrived at solely from *Re-thinking Missions* will have a perspective brilliantly illumined in many ranges, but blurred in some places and distorted in others. Doctor Mott's unique experience of examining the missionary enterprise in every land repeatedly across four decades, and in sharing the central policy-making and progressive processes of continuous re-thinking, has given him an unrivaled world-perspective. To get the sting and spur of the Laymen's Report combined with the poise, challenge, and momentum of the *Presentday Summons*, presents educationally, in my view, an almost ideal balance.

The failure of the religious leadership of America to grapple educationally with this opportunity would be disastrous for still another reason. There is imminent peril that controversialists may regiment people within the churches into sharply divided and hostile theological camps. If the moldy and futile labels, Liberal and Conservative, are to be tied round our necks, then this new interest in the content of Christianity and in its missionary enterprise will explode in catastrophe.

### III

Holding steadily in mind this educational approach to the younger generation, let us examine first the process by which this report came into being and then its contents:

At the beginning of 1930, Dr. John R. Mott unfolded to a group of

laymen related to the American Baptist Foreign Missionary work the world situation as he had experienced it during the voyage he had then completed round the world. These men saw on the one side a great opportunity and on the other diminished income.

Why should not these laymen appoint a commission to go out and examine the missions of their own society, asking (1) Is the work worth supporting? (2) If so, how can we help it to shape its processes in ways more adequate to the swiftly changing challenges of the new movements of youth in Asia?

These Baptist laymen, among whom Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., was a member, soon saw that the Congregationalists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and others were in a similar situation. Therefore, they called leading men of those denominations into their counsels. Together they decided to make an inquiry independently of the Mission Boards into the work of those North American Societies in Asia. The Mission Boards gave every possible help and were cordial in backing the project. To have weight, however, it was necessary for it to work without official relationship with the Missionary Societies.

By the autumn of 1930 these laymen, with the co-operation of the Institute of Social and Religious Research, launched into India, Burma, China, Korea, and Japan a highly qualified group of research workers who spent about a year in amassing facts about their missions in those areas, and in developing generalizations on the basis of the facts. This material, mountainous in actual bulk, was to help the second and important process of "appraisal." This great mass is now being sifted and arranged with a view to publication in at least seven considerable volumes. Meanwhile those to be responsible for appraising the situation were gathered together. They sailed in the early autumn of 1931, and, arriving in Bombay on October 23rd, spent three months in India and Burma, after which they put in a week in Ceylon reviewing what they had discovered. Arriving at Hong Kong in February, they spent some two months in China at a time of intense agitation. Five proceeded to Japan by the loop line of Korea and Manchuria; the others went direct. They all sailed from Japan in June, 1932; and, first in Honolulu and then on the mainland of North America, wrought out their report.

Different members of the commission had a major responsibility for the different sides of the general subject. For the writing of the first four chapters on general principles the chairman of the commission, Professor Hocking, of Harvard, was mainly responsible; as was Professor Rufus

Jones for that on the "Mission and the Church"; while Mrs. Hocking did a considerable part of two chapters on education and so on. All the members of the report, however, wholeheartedly signed the complete document.

The process of the book is logical. It starts on central principles. Without wasting any time on discussion as to whether missions are essential, they say: "There is an always valid impulse of love to men; one offers one's own faith, simply because that is the best one has to offer." We will return to this section of the book again.

A second section of the book is headed "Aspects of Mission Work." It reviews the relation of the mission to the church; has several chapters on education; a vigorous presentation of the call for literature; then deals with medical, agricultural, women's and industrial aspects of missionary work. The third and shortest part of the book grapples with problems of administration abroad and at home, concentrating in the home part on a more drastic thoroughness in choosing and preparing missionaries, and proposing a revolutionary plan for centralized co-operation between boards.

One finishes the book after a first and still more after a second reading with a feeling of intense gratitude to the men and women who have dedicated their time and high gifts with such enthusiasm and technical skill to presenting the report. That gratitude is even greater for the courage and sincere frankness with which they have expressed their convictions.

The future program of missions, as the Laymen's Appraisal envisages it, is on the following lines. At present missions are, they say, largely engaged in what they describe as temporary functions—sending persons to preach the message widely and to promote the church in the field, gathering together a distinctive body of local Christians, with educational and medical work aimed primarily at evangelizing and at building the church, while training nationalists as leaders to replace missionaries.

Instead of that, and as permanent functions, the laymen see in the future fewer people from the West in the mission fields of Asia, but quite highly equipped, acceptable to or invited by the foreign land to give advice and counsel as asked; to study the local cultural problems, to help to preserve what is of value in the old, and to help in transition to the new. Education, medicine, and the application of the Christian view of life to rural life and to that of industry, will be carried on in a pioneer and experimental way to meet the needs of the foreign field. In fellowship with Buddhists, Mohammedans and others, we shall seek to get a better grasp of the meaning of Christianity and to promote world unity through the spread of the universal elements of religion. Fellowship should be

developed among those who are unwilling to enter the Christian Church, but who see in Jesus the ideal way of life. Vigorous impetus should be given to movements for co-operation and of concentration in the field; while at home a single administrative organization should be created on which the different boards would find representation, to control the development of the whole enterprise.

When we ask for a definition of the motive and the goal, there are a large number of different expressions, none of which would exactly convey the sense of evangelism in the way, for instance, that Saint Paul or Robert Morrison or, to come up to our own day, Kagawa, or Dr. Cheng Ching-yi would express it. Here, for instance, is Kagawa's recent expression of his conviction. It comes at the end of a long statement by him on the Kingdom of God Movement:

This larger vision of the Kingdom of God, instead of minimizing the need of the oral proclamation of the Gospel, raises that need to the *nth* degree. An ever-increasing emphasis must be placed upon evangelism as one of the God-given means of realizing this Christian social and world order. However, this evangelism also must be international in its method and scope. The distinction of sending and receiving countries must be done away with. The old traditional missions whose major goal is the building of denominations must pass out of the picture. The whole world-Christian enterprise must be put on a co-operative and sharing basis.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. John R. Mott, who has kept closely alongside modern developments, concentrates into a single sentence in his book *The Presentday Summons* what is in his view the central aim of missions:

Expressed quite simply, this governing objective is to make Jesus Christ heard, known, trusted, loved and obeyed in the whole range of individual life and in all human relationships.<sup>2</sup>

To bring out from another angle the same contrast of emphasis, we find in *Re-thinking Missions* the following as a first general recommendation for mission schools in the East:

That where missions are conducting schools, the aim of those schools should be primarily education, not evangelization, and that teachers and administrators should be chosen with this standard in view.<sup>3</sup>

Doctor Mott, in his *Presentday Summons*, while recommending the most drastic concentration on "only so many institutions as can be maintained with the highest Christian efficiency," goes on to say:

<sup>1</sup> Kagawa. By William Axling. S. C. M. London. 1932. Pp. 142-3.

<sup>2</sup> *The Presentday Summons*. By J. R. Mott. Cokesbury Press, Nashville. 1931. P. 203.

<sup>3</sup> *Re-Thinking Missions*. Harper and Brothers, New York. 1932. P. 163.

"This principle, in turn, involves preserving at all costs an adequate staff, adequate in number and in intellectual ability, and adequate in contagious Christian conviction and character. Central in all their thinking, planning, contacts and service will be the influencing of motives, the springs of idealism, the action of the will through laying secure thought-bases of faith and through exposure to the Ever-Living and Ever-Creative God as revealed in Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup>

In order to get a fairly representative picture of the motive presented in *Re-thinking Missions*, here are half a dozen out of a score of statements that I have before me:

To convey a clear and convincing message of idealism solidly based upon the testimony of human experience, and upon the eternal nature of the universe. (P. 97.)

To seek with people of other lands a true knowledge and love of God, expressing in life and word what we have learned through Jesus Christ, and endeavoring to give effect to his Spirit in the life of the world. (P. 50.)

To follow the obvious teachings of Jesus and to undertake the actual experiment of life that would make the Kingdom of God a reality. (P. 112.)

To evangelize by living and by human service. (P. 65.)

To be an ambassador representing the Christian way of thought and life, ready to give advice and counsel whether to the local church or to other leaders of religion and thought, sympathetically concerned with the problem of changing local culture, and trying to minimize the strains of an abrupt breach with tradition. (P. 26.)

To promote world unity through a spread of the understanding of the vital elements of religion. (P. 27.)

Let us look at this problem of motive from another angle. The Commissioners raise the issue, which became dominant five years ago at the Jerusalem meeting of the International Missionary Council, that the spread across the world of tidal waves of sheer materialism made a new alignment necessary. The real enemy of Christianity is this increasing prevalent non-religion; a view of life which both in thought and practice looks to material ends as the goal.

That, obviously, alters the perspective in which a Christian going into the world fields regards Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Confucianism. We are all agreed that all religions have some elements of reality and final truth; and that all men of all faiths should seek and enjoy spiritual fellowship with one another. But there are two methods of re-alignment that are radically different from one another. From the one point of view, the man who believes that in Christ and his Good News of the kingdom of God ultimate reality and final values are found will essay so to lead men everywhere into his presence that they may, facing him, face at the same time the necessity for decision between, on the one hand, loyalty

<sup>4</sup> *The Presentday Summons*. Pp. 44-5.



to him and to the values that he releases in the world, and, on the other hand, loyalty to material values. It is the old decision that Jesus himself stated—"Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." In that perspective the elements of truth in non-Christian faiths are hailed as allies in the world-conflict with materialism, as are the passion for truth in pure science and the tools that technical science puts into the hands of the surgeon, the doctor, the engineer, and so on.

The other process of re-alignment is, still regarding all religions as having some elements of reality and final truth, to hold that none of them has reached final truth, and hence to move toward a synthesis of them all, a process for which the usual single word is "syncretism."

At Jerusalem the leaders of Christian forces from East and West moved with unhesitating decision to the former view. It was stated in simple, moving and convincing language in the message that went out from Jerusalem. It may not be out of place to recall some sentences from that message which gains and not loses by being read alongside the first four chapters of *Re-thinking Missions*. After the highly concentrated, balanced picture of the transformation through which the world order is passing, the Jerusalem Message says:

In this world, bewildered and groping for its way, Jesus Christ has drawn to himself the attention and admiration of mankind as never before. He stands before men as plainly greater than Western civilization, greater than the Christianity that the world has come to know. Many who have not hitherto been won to his Church yet find in him their hero and their ideal. Within his Church there is a widespread desire for unity centered in his Person.

Against this background and in relation to it, we have to proclaim our message.

Our message is Jesus Christ. He is the revelation of what God is and of what man may become. In him we come face to face with the ultimate reality of the universe; he makes known to us God as our Father, perfect and infinite in love and in righteousness; for in him we find God incarnate, the final, yet ever-unfolding, revelation of the God in whom we live and move and have our being.

We hold that through all that happens, in light and in darkness, God is working, ruling and overruling. Jesus Christ, in his life and through his death and resurrection, has disclosed to us the Father, the Supreme Reality, as almighty Love, reconciling the world to himself by the Cross, suffering with men in their struggle against sin and evil, bearing with them and for them the burden of sin, forgiving them as they, with forgiveness in their own hearts, turn to him in repentance and faith, and creating humanity anew for an ever-growing, ever-enlarging, everlasting life.<sup>6</sup>

The Message repudiates all attempts of trade or governments to use the missionary cause for ulterior purposes and even of religious imperialism,

<sup>6</sup> The Message is printed in full as an Appendix to Dr. Mott's *The Presentday Summons to the World Mission of Christianity*. Cokesbury Press, Nashville. 1931. Pp. 250ff.



or binding, fixed, ecclesiastical forms on the younger churches. There follows a vigorous and moving statement of the social Gospel.

After calling for an increased measure of co-operation between the churches of all nations, the Jerusalem Message concludes:

We are persuaded that we and all Christian people must seek a more heroic practice of the Gospel. It cannot be that our present complacency and moderation are a faithful expression of the mind of Christ, and of the meaning of his Cross and Resurrection in the midst of the wrong and want and sin of our modern world. As we contemplate the work with which Christ has charged his Church, we who are met here on the Mount of Olives, in sight of Calvary, would take up for ourselves and summon those from whom we come and to whom we return to take up with us the Cross of Christ, and all that for which it stands, and to go forth into the world to live in the fellowship of his sufferings and by the power of his resurrection, in hope and expectation of his glorious Kingdom.

In contrast with this decisive and broad clarity which combines sharply focussed intellectual vision with an immensely wide horizon, I find the missionary message in *Re-thinking Missions*, especially in its first four chapters, elusive. For instance, on page 28 we have a sentence that should mean something of enormous importance in the summary of the permanent functions of Foreign Missions: *Promoting world unity through the spread of the universal elements of religion.*

That sentence has come up again and again in my discussions on *Re-thinking Missions* with four groups of students in New England, totaling over two hundred men and women. Yet we cannot even now see whether that means discovering the simplest common denominator of all religions, or the common ground of the religious intuition of the human race, using that as a basis of world unity (which is what it seems to mean on the face of it), or whether it means the spread of what is really true in religion until it becomes universal. It almost looks as though underlying the phrase is the assumption (which is surely unjustifiable) that what is common to all religions is true. I have tried repeatedly, on the assumption that the phrase means "what is common to all religions," to discover what that is. It cannot be a conception of God, because, firstly, Gautama Buddha and Confucius were both agnostics; and, secondly, if we take religions with a definite doctrine of God, we find that what makes each religion a reality is not the statement that God is, but that he has a definite character. Thus, Islam and Christianity both say that God is and that he is One and Holy; but it is of the very essence of the God and Father of Jesus Christ that he is Father; that he suffers positively in the estrangement of his children, and rejoices in their reconciliation to himself, and, above all, that

he took a divine initiative in Christ to reconcile men to himself. If that is so, then what is common to the two religions is less significant than what is distinctive in each. *Re-thinking Missions* says proclaim the universal; Jerusalem (that is, the churches in the Mission Field and at home) says proclaim and live the distinctive until it becomes universal.

It is just here that I have the greatest difficulty in finding *Re-thinking Missions* adequate for the education of youth in the world-mission of Christianity. But here, once more, *Re-thinking Missions* is the electric starter. Furthermore, new light continues to break. With passionate emphasis at the Roosevelt Hotel meeting last November Professor Hocking said:

We unite in love of Christ and in the passionate desire that his spirit may spread throughout this work of men—distracted, broken, suffering, sinful.

When asked, again, in Chicago, this year to say what meaning there would be for him in the light of his philosophy in the phrase, "a lost soul," he rose and impromptu made the following moving and pregnant analysis, which was taken down verbatim at the time and to which he gives his authority. It seems to me so important that I set it down here in full:

Our life is a process of conversation between ourselves and the whole of the world in which we live. It is possible for human beings to talk to one another with their lips and to be remote from one another in their hearts. Falsehood and selfishness create chasms between man and man; and the professions of friendship have always to be tested by the inner facts of sincerity and love.

These principles of human intercourse are also valid for this continuous conversation between the individual and his world. A man may be at odds with his world and he may be in harmony with his world; but there is everything in human experience to give us, as we look at the facts of nature and at the facts of history, a sense of loneliness in the presence of the great unknown. There it is, in its immensity, operating according to natural laws, opaque, silent, inscrutable, frequently cruel, and apparently uninterested in the lot of us poor human beings.

Then too, in the group which we call humanity, there is something massive, something immense, something in the preoccupation of individuals and of social wholes, which makes the individual person feel that he is alone and uncared for, and that his only possible policy is one of struggling with might and main to gain for himself by snatching from the whole what he can.

Now in so far as a person maintains this picture of the universe, he is a lost soul: he cannot look at the world with confidence. He cannot see beyond that horizon which closes his life in nothingness and means the ultimate wiping out of the race. He cannot see any meaning in his life beyond what he can enforce by dint of his own self-assertion. In so far as we feel in ourselves this absence of confidence, this absence of certainty, this fear of calamity and of death, this servitude to chance, this rebellion, this poor guess-work of questions thrown into the void and receiving no answers, we are lost.

The only thing which could come to us to make it possible for us to deal in full honor and trust with the world, and with each other, is some assurance *that these appearances are not true*; some assurance that out of the silence there is a voice which speaks, and in the callous machinery of the cosmos there is a heart which cares, and a purpose which plans. *Whatever brings this assurance comes as a saviour.* The saviour, to you, is that event, that person, that word, in which you can say, The Universe speaks to me, God speaks to me.

I believe that Christianity has given the name of Christ to what we might call the voice of God to man; and I like to think of the word Christ as meaning what we might call the *human face of God*. The veil of reality has been broken, as though some being had come toward us out of the darkness; and we can say to the universe, not "*It is there,*" but "*Thou art there, and Thou carest for me.*"

It is this message which Christianity, I think, brings to men, and brings with an assurance and definiteness which we find in no other religion.<sup>6</sup>

In those last sentences we see divine initiative breaking through into the human scene. In those two quotations we share the missionary spirit and the passionate loyalty to Jesus Christ that they express. We discover once more that when men's faces are turned to him they find, astonishingly, that they are standing on common ground. Their differences remain real; but their common loyalties form a starting point for adventurous fellowship. To such an adventure this marvelous interest aroused by *Re-thinking Missions* calls men of varied schools of thought to share in a common educational process.

The world is in confusion. It is bewildered amid clamorous rivalries of Nationalism and Bolshevism. It is staggering through economic depression under a load of frozen wealth. It dreads new wars; but feels powerless to avert them. It sees the old order shattered; but has no foundation for a new one.

If those of all schools of thought who believe in Christ can share with youth convincingly their burning vision of desperate human need and of the Good News of Christ, we shall in a few years look back to this hour not as the twilight of Missions, but their second and brighter dawn.

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<sup>6</sup> Remarks of Professor William Ernest Hocking, at the Alden Tuthill Lecture, Hyde Park Baptist Church, Chicago, January 26, 1933, in answer to a question about the verifiable meaning of a "lost soul."

# The Poetry of Emily Dickinson

WALLACE H. FINCH

IN his little book, *The Preacher as Man of Letters*, Richard Roberts reveals the fact, and something of the source of his charm as preacher and writer. In it he also records the interesting experience of a recent discovery of Emily Dickinson. He says:

"A more recent discovery for me has been the poems of Emily Dickinson. I have not time to discuss the work of this very remarkable woman. Apart from one or two fugitive pieces, I did not know of it until last fall, when I became possessed of the two volumes; and I have been astonished ever since at the way the poems have followed me, again and again rising unbidden to my mind."

That experience of Richard Roberts is in keeping with what has happened to many others, though there are scores of preachers who have not discovered her at all.

One reason for this is that her poems did not appear, as is the case with most other poets, during her lifetime, but came to the world as a posthumous gift. During her life it was known to a small circle of select friends that a rare soul was habited in a frail body living in the old college town of Amherst, but the world at large knew nothing of it. Consequently, the world was little prepared when after her death it awakened one morning to discover the poems of Emily Dickinson lying in its lap.

During her lifetime only four of her poems were published. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, who wrote the introduction to the first volume of her posthumous poetry, said, "She habitually concealed her mind, like her person, from all but a very few friends." In 1890, four years after her death, the first volume of her verse was published. In 1892 and in 1896 came other volumes. In 1914, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, her niece, gave to the world another generous installment in *The Single Hound*, and 1924 saw the publication of the *Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* and *The Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson*, prepared by Madam Bianchi. A further volume of her poems came in 1929, under the caption *Further Poems of Emily Dickinson*. There are all told over eight hundred of these cryptic but direct and spontaneous illuminations. In many of them the reach of her thought is so daring, the gaps so provocative that some of her reviewers have not hesitated to insist that she is the greatest woman poet since Sappho.

The centenary of her birth in 1930 was the signal for a reawakened

interest in her work, and was the occasion for the appearance of the now famous Centenary edition of her poems. It is a book that people who are interested in life and its meanings can well afford to deny themselves, if not bread, at any rate, pudding and cake to possess.

Here is a place where the public library can help us but little. One hardly thinks or speaks of "having read" the poems of Emily Dickinson. That means so little it is hardly an exaggeration to say that it means nothing at all. To know them is not to read them, but to read and re-read them; to linger in reflection and meditation over their abrupt and startling imagery; to retain in the mental palate the unique and sometimes stinging flavor of her astonishing expressions; and to wonder at the spirit that evoked them.

"Her grace is all she has,  
And that, so vast displays,  
One Art, to recognize must be,  
Another Art to praise."

It is a liberal education in literary criticism to note what the critics have had to say of her and of her place in literature, and to observe the characterizations they have bestowed upon her. In the introduction to "The Centenary Edition" of her poems, Madam Bianchi quotes a list of these labels from her reviewers. The striking quality of these descriptives, and the degree to which they clash with each other, indicates that the reviewers, while startled and excited by the vision, are confused at its brilliance. A spirit that can evoke from the critics such labels as: "A New England Nun," "A White Moth," "A Wood Thrush," you would hardly expect other reviewers to designate as: "A Modern Sappho," "Pan's Sister," or "An Epigrammatic Walt Whitman." And you would be still more surprised to have yet others declare her to be "Malchizadeck" or even "The Flower of American Transcendentalism."

The truth, of course, is that Emily Dickinson was what Matthew Bramble would call "An Original"; and when true originality flashes upon us, its genuineness is attested by the more or less confused manner in which the beholders report what they have seen. It is obvious at once that if Emily Dickinson was "A New England Nun," she could hardly have been at the same time "A Modern Sappho," to say nothing at all of the anti-thetic qualities of these other characterizations. It is significant, however, that she has elicited these labels, and doubtlessly those who bestowed them are reporting in entire honesty what they have seen.

All this is partly explained by the range of her interest in life. She

lived most of her days a more or less cloistered existence, yet so wide were her sympathies, so eager and instinctive her understandings, that her work has something of the quality of universality. The major divisions of her poems as given in the Centenary Edition are under the respective captions, "Life," "Nature," "Love," "Time and Eternity." While these captions are sufficiently inclusive to admit almost any subject, they do not in themselves clearly suggest the complete range and the varied gradations of the poems. Indeed, one of the qualities that causes the lines of Emily Dickinson "to rise unbidden" to the minds of those who take time to know her, is the sweep of the subjects that claim her attention and the amazing richness and variety of her imagery. The exotic quality of her imagination seems a complete refutation of her secluded existence, her Puritan birth and her New England environment. It is a vindication of her own claim that:

"The brain is wider than the sky,  
For, put them side by side,  
The one the other will include  
With ease, and you beside.

The brain is deeper than the sea,  
For, hold them blue to blue,  
The one the other will absorb,  
As sponges, buckets do.

The brain is just the weight of God,  
For, lift them pound for pound,  
And they will differ, if they do,  
As syllable from sound."

The secluded character of her life is no ground for supposing that either her mind or spirit was withdrawn into an ivory tower sort of existence, untouched by the current tides of the human struggle. Her immense mental and spiritual vitality that is so stimulating to the reader, includes in its sweep areas of thought and emotion that "out-reach the circumference of her daily habit." The probable explanation of this lies in the intensity with which she experienced life. She is all alive. She is preoccupied with the naked fact of life, and trembles to it as the leaves of the poplar to a breeze no other tree records. One of the sayings of Bishop McConnell is that to ask some people to meditate is equivalent to asking them to go to sleep. Meditation is not a sleep-producing exercise to Emily. It is then that she is most awake, most responsive, sensitized all over. One



hardly knows how to classify a spirit so intoxicated with life that she can sing:

"I taste a liquor never brewed,  
From tankard scooped in pearl;  
Not all the vats upon the Rhine  
Yield such an alcohol!

Inebriate of air am I,  
And debauchee of dew,  
Reeling, through endless summer days,  
From inns of molten blue.

When landlords turn the drunken bee  
Out of the foxglove's door,  
When butterflies renounce their drams,  
I shall but drink the more!

Till seraphs swing their snowy hats,  
And saints to windows run,  
To see the little tippler  
Leaning against the sun!"

Seraphs swinging their snowy hats, and saints running to the windows of heaven to see a little tippler leaning against the sun, is a bit of mind play at once so audacious and vigorous that only one fully alive could have given it birth. And such bursts of elfin delight in life are frequent in her pages. Reading them from this angle it is possible to understand why one reviewer called her "An epigrammatic Walt Whitman."

One, at least, of the things that sometimes discourages us with the poets is the uniformity of their responses to their inspirations. Given the subject, we can plat with reasonable accuracy the line of the development of their thought, and the degree of the intensity of their emotion. There are beaten paths, time honored, which, whatever the vehicle of craftsmanship employed, sooner or later claim them. It is this likely uniformity that has discouraged the large group of readers who are more interested in the thought-content of a poem than they are in the presence or absence of rhyme or rhythm, dissonance or assonance. They concede these things to the craftsmanship of the writer. What they do ask is that there shall be a thought-content, and that it shall possess something of the protean amplitude of life itself.

There is no especial reason in experience why spring, or birth, or death, or the stars, or even a Grecian urn, should always awaken the same emotions. As a matter of fact, in life they do not. There are those to whom spring means a perennial intoxication of delight; there are others to

whom it means no more than a succession of disagreeable colds. Granted that there is nothing at all in a cold that lends itself to poetic expression, nevertheless, the true poet must somehow manage to leave room for those to whom spring is not always a delight.

It is this quality of ample unexpectedness in the poems of Emily Dickinson that makes them a perpetual delight. Even with the subject of inspiration given, there is no anticipating where her emotional response will land. We can be sure of only two things, it will land quickly—all her poems are short—and it will land accurately. This is because her mind is essentially the mind of the pioneer. She explores the realms of mental and emotional possibility, as the old sea-kings searched the sea. Her spiritual exhilaration she imparts to others because it is so absorbingly complete in herself.

The startling and abrupt manner in which she will swing a reflection upon a subject commonplace in itself to a most uncommon and breath-taking conclusion, is one of her deepest characteristics. And she does it with such complete finality. There is no argument, no room for gainsaying; its suddenness is like a rifle shot in the silence. There is a flash of intuition, a daring seizure of just the one word in all the world for the purpose, and the thing's done. To call God a burglar would be irreverent in sober prose. We scarcely know what to call it in lines like these:

"I never lost as much but twice,  
And that was in the sod;  
Twice have I stood a beggar  
Before the door of God!

Angels, twice descending,  
Reimbursed my store.  
Burglar, banker, father,  
I am poor once more!"

But whatever we do call it, we are hardly likely to think of it as an irreverance.

This brings us to some observations upon her use of words. I think it is Madam Bianchi who tells us that Emily was never seen to consult a dictionary. She *read* the dictionary. Bill Nye once said of a new edition of the Century Dictionary, "I like it immensely. It is quite thrilling in places, and although somewhat jerky in style and verbose, perhaps, its word painting is accurate and delightful." What Bill said in fun, was evidently a fact with Emily. She experimented with the whole range of word painting. Her verse is often suffused in color. It is not simply that color-words like

"cochineal," "mazarin," or color phrases like "streaks of meteor," "purple territories," are made to do service, but entire poems are bathed in color. Then too, at times it is a significant word, perhaps at the very end, which flashes back, as does the sunset, a luminosity that changes the entire scene.

As with color so it is with sound. Dr. Charles E. Jefferson has somewhere a distinction between sound and noise. Noise, he insists, is man-made. All the noise in the world he attributes to man, the noise-maker. To him sound is the product of Nature. Even in its most majestic and awe-inspiring volume, like the thunder of summer skies, he insists the distinction exists. There is something in this distinction. It is not that man cannot create sound, but that he does create noise. With this distinction in mind, we may say there is no noise in the poems of Emily Dickinson. Indeed, it is a solecism even to suggest it. Their whole mood is so reticent, and in one sense so diffident, that noise is the very last thing we think of in connection with them. Nevertheless, the whole gamut of sound is there.

And, curiously enough, this sound element is blended with their color element. I recall visiting in the home of a man, a natural genius for music. He was not a musician in the sense of technical training and discipline, nevertheless, he had achieved some remarkable insights and understandings in music. He had built into his home a noble organ. From the console he controlled the many lights in the music room. As he played, and as the various shades and colors came and went in harmony with the character of the music, it produced in me an entirely new sense of the intimate relation between color and sound. Something of this sort is found in some of these poems. It is hardly necessary to illustrate it. Those who are familiar with the poems will recognize it, and those who have still to become acquainted with them will sooner or later become aware of it.

It is always a matter of interest to me to note the sense of action in her poems. Her verbs are rarely neuter or passive. Her phrases are masculine in feeling, instinct with movement, charged with energy. This is all the more remarkable in view of the delicate and almost fastidious womanliness of her nature. The freedom with which she "endows the inanimate with the animate verb," has often been commented on. What is not so often noticed is the essentially masculine quality of verbs she employs. There is in her lines the sense of warmth that pronounced activity generates. Such verbs and phrases as: "Took the flag," "Flung a menace," "Put up the bars," "Close the valves," "Scooped a turnpike," "Rescinded the wrench," "Occupied with shot," "Soldered," "Raffle,"

"Battered down," "String the stalactite," suggest not only action, but a masculine sort of action. And these were taken entirely at random from her poems. This is one, at least, of the remarkable things about the work of this extraordinary woman. She is in this sense a poet for the worker. Not that she glorifies work for work's sake, rather she creates the mood for work. The insights and intuitions she expresses are energizing in their effect.

The life story of Emily Dickinson is one of the strangest and most moving of our modern world. Her self-immurement in resistance to an eager human love, has in it an element of one of the old Greek tragedies. The manner in which she transmuted her personal sacrifice and loss into service to the ampler interests of the soul is striking confirmation of a doctrine as old as Calvary.

Joseph Wood Krutch, in his chapter on "The Tragic Fallacy," thinks the possibility of true tragedy is denied to us moderns, not only because we have lost our faith in God, but because we have also lost our faith in man. Calamities can still befall us, but we cannot seize upon our suffering and use it as a means by which joy may be wrung out of existence. Mr. Krutch has far too mean a view of modern life. His theory crumbles before the facts of this single life. That calamity was there, one reading these poems can never doubt.

"I took one draught of life,  
I'll tell you what I paid,  
Precisely an existence—  
The market price, they said.

They weighed me, dust by dust,  
They balanced film by film,  
Then handed me my being's worth—  
A single dram of Heaven."

That she knew how to seize her suffering and wring joy out of it, her poems make perfectly clear. And it is equally clear that her suffering was powerless to destroy either her faith in the essential nobility of human nature, or her confidence in what Robert Louis Stevenson called "the ultimate decency of things."

"Dear Sue," she writes:

"I'm thinking on that other morn,  
When ceremonies let go,  
And creatures clad in Victory  
Go up by two and two!"

To describe the religion of Emily Dickinson as reflected in her poems is not a simple task. This is partly because of what Louis Untermeyer calls "her gnomic imagery," which he rightly says is "tremendous in implication." Many of her meanings are left for the reader to discover for himself. There are poems, as he points out, which approach "Olympian satire," but there are others like the widely quoted "I never saw a moor," which reflect a faith as calm as a summer sea.

It seems to me this may be due to the fact that Emily never admitted, even to herself, that she was writing for either her contemporaries or her posterity. She welcomed the reflection that death would bring to her "Escape from Circumstances and a Name." Writing thus, she phrased all her moods, even those instinctive questionings normally suppressed by others, who vision a public waiting to hear and see. Her native perspicacity and honesty compelled her to record what her natural reticence prompted her to withhold.

Nevertheless, there are some things that are clear. God is to her inevitable. She may apologize to him "For thine own duplicity"; petition him as "Burglar, banker, father," or refer to him as "Our old neighbor, God"; still it is "God at every gate" who alone can give meaning to life. The intensity with which she experienced beauty, love, justice, made these the criteria by which she judged God. Failing sometimes to find adequate securities for these values so fundamental to her, she was disposed to argue or even to upbraid. She is not unlike a modern Job, measuring what she has lost by what she has, and unable to refrain from asking, "Why?" Superficially it is easy to wish that she might have repressed her questionings and remained constantly on the even level of confidence unperturbed. But she is not interested in writing apologetics, she is recording the experiences of a soul.

One of her reviewers speaks of her in later years as being "preoccupied with death." It would be far nearer the mark to say she was preoccupied with what death would reveal. She was always sure it would be a revelation. The mystery behind the bars is always claiming her. Whether it is her own or the death of another she visions it in terms of further engagement and fuller understandings. She is certain:

"This world is not conclusion:  
A sequel stands beyond."

She is sometimes oppressed by the fact that we do not know death, but she concludes:

"Christ's acquaintance with him,  
Justifies him, though."

On the strength of the acquaintance of that "Tender Pioneer" with death, she is willing to risk it:

"Base must be the cowards  
Dare not venture now."

No definitive statement of her faith is possible. Her "gnomic imagery" closes the door to dogmatic insistence while it at the same time props it open to individual exploration and understanding. It is perfectly clear, however, that with her soul is in the saddle. The final meaning of life's riddle lies not in the realm of the things that are seen. She, no less than the prophets and the apostles, moves in the imperial realm of the spirit. Because she is so unequivocally and uncompromisingly the poet of the soul, her lines will continue to rise "Again and again unbidden to the mind" of those who know her.

The cover design on the first edition of all three volumes of her poems, and on the two volumes of Letters, is a spray of Indian Pipes. It also appears on the paper sheath that encloses the Centenary Edition. In one of her letters Emily refers to this strange and beautiful plant as "the preferred<sup>d</sup> flower of life," in another as "my pipes." A small panel of Indian Pipes, painted by Mabel Loomis Todd and presented to her in 1882, stood in her room until her death. To one who has seen this exquisite plant in its freshness, growing in some cool and secluded spot, the association will seem appropriate. White it is, nearly translucent, leafless, with single waxen flower, white like the stem, as if its blood had been drained away by a hidden wound, yet a spirit defiant, incorruptible of death, that will bloom at any and all costs whatsoever. And of all places one is likely to find it, search first the north side of the mountain.

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# The Relevance of Theology

HENRY P. VAN DUSEN

## I

LET us direct our thought to the question, what, if any, is the distinctive contribution of theology to a time like ours? Please note the form of our question. We are not asking "What is the contribution of religion to an hour like this?" Or, "of the ministry?" Or, "of a theological seminary?" The answers to all of these questions are important, of course. But our question is, "What is the specific contribution of theology?"

Religion is an experience which may be given very broad definition; its usefulness in a period of discouragement and spiritual hunger should be patent enough. The ministry at its best is a profession of general helpfulness to those in need. And the clear function of a theological seminary is to prepare students for these tasks of helpfulness—for the mediation of the gifts of religion to needy men and women. But theology is a body of ideas, of convictions, of certainties, of statements of assured fact, of truth. Its gift, if any, must fall within this area—of truth. What has theology to say to our day?

Many, I suspect, would agree that we should expect no contribution from theology. Mr. Walter Lippmann has recently suggested that, in a time so badly out of joint as ours, the scholar—the serious student of underlying truths and ultimate principles—must be content to withdraw into aloof detachment until matters somehow right themselves; then he may emerge from the ivory tower which he is urged to erect against the pressure of immediacy and advise the world why it went wrong and how it happens to have muddled out of its chaos into reasonable order once more. This is the pith of his advice: "The scholar will build a wall against chaos, and behind that wall, as in other bleak ages of the history of man, he will give his true allegiance, not to the immediate world, but to the invisible empire of reason." But surely this is an unpardonable counsel of despair. If it were sound advice, it would condemn theology to the stigma of irrelevance which popular opinion so readily fixes upon it. At least this has never been the wont of living theology. Its wisdom for its day has not often been accepted; the Cross is sufficient witness to that fact. But it has had wisdom—immediate, pressingly relevant truth for the hour. We return to our question, "What is the message of theology to a time like

ours?" Or, more definitely, "What is the relevance of the Christian idea of God to an hour of baffled confusion?"

## II

Let us seek our answer in the contrast between our fathers' thought of God and the *working* belief in God which actually influences a quite typical layman of to-day. There were at least two elements in an older generation's certainty of God almost wholly absent from their grandsons' living conviction.

(a) In the first place, to them God was the God of history. His living Command ruled not only the welfare of individuals but the destinies of nations and generations. His righteous Will for mankind prevailed in spite of and if necessary over the willful purposes of men and parties. It was a favorite saying of a typical representative of that generation: "Well, he made it all. He knew what he was doing. He did not need to make it, unless he liked. And he will see it through." And one of the most remarkable women of the nineteenth century whose life touched its century just at the conclusion of the war, wrote in a dark hour of the war: "Another year of pressing care and anxiety has opened upon us, and we are having more and more to leave all these things to the guidance of our Father in Heaven and to his wisdom alone. When his time comes to give us rest and peace, nothing can withstand his purpose and power." It would be difficult to find a better rendering of the deepest certainty of her generation. The divine hand determined the ultimate issue of all temporal events, corporate as well as individual. And that determination was for the vindication of truth and right. For the God of history was pre-eminently a God of righteousness. His meaning for mankind was summed up in the conception of an overarching divine Providence.

(b) But secondly, for our fathers, God was no mere impersonal providential agency impelling the course of history toward a right outcome. He was the first and most assured of all present realities—that Living Fact without which no other fact could be imagined, the Source and Initiator of good as well as the Guardian of righteousness, incessantly active in personal solicitude and direct impact upon individual lives. To be sure, that older generation had its skeptics; but they were relatively few in number and limited in influence, confined mostly to the sterile abstractions of the academic atmosphere. Agnosticism in religion, like subjectivism in philosophy, was all well enough for the subtleties of the sophisticated but sheer nonsense to common sense. I think it is fair to say that, generally speaking,

men believed the reality of the Living God—his existence, his majesty, his power, and his vital dominance—to be as certain as the reality of the physical universe. And he was One ceaselessly moving in concern and care for men—touching their lives to restrain, to reprove, to comfort, to encourage, to redeem. For the God of personal religion was primarily a God of love. His meaning for men was caught up into the single word, "Father."

The righteous God of the ages working his Will through the mysterious agency of an inscrutable Providence, and the solicitous Guardian of personal life whom men might confidently approach as Friend, together gave to our fathers the reality of the Living God—a God actively in control of the events of the public order *plus* a God making his presence known to men one by one.

It is precisely these two elements which have faded from our generation's working certainty of God. We *do* believe in a God discoverable in the ultimate structure of the universe; but not One who guides the ebb and flow of human events. The God whom moderns recognize is one to be acknowledged but hardly to be feared. And we *do* believe in a God in some distant sense related to human life; but not one who is the intimate Counselor of my perplexed and vacillating and tarnished soul. The God whom moderns know is one to be worshiped, but hardly to be loved. Most important of all, for the older generation, God was the most indisputable fact of all existence; but for us, God, if believed in at all, is a guest admitted to the precincts of conviction rather tentatively and only after rigorous scrutiny.

### III

Now, the most significant contribution which theology may make to our world's life at this moment is precisely at these two points. At each, our fathers were essentially right. For the truth of the matter is that human history *does* move within the encompassing, chastening, inexorable grip of the Rule of God. And God is the first and most secure of all certainties; the presupposition of all else; each individual human spirit is sustained and constrained at every moment of its life by the living presence of the Divine Spirit.

1. First, then, God in history. Here the logic of the matter might have guided men's thoughts aright. For it should be obvious that, if there be a God at all, he must be one who has not merely given the universe its structure but has reserved to himself some measure of determination of its progress and its final destiny. Indeed, the contrary assumption—that the

final determination of history's outcome, to make or to mar, lies within the power of human caprice—is *a priori* preposterous. It is a direct fruit of the modern mind's egocentric perspective.

But we are not dependent upon *a priori* probabilities. The long story of mankind's pilgrimage is living witness to God in history. Our fathers' conviction was a direct legacy from the thought of the Old Testament prophets—that succession of strange, fantastic, almost fanatic men who saw more deeply than their contemporaries the inner significance of what was transpiring before the eyes of all, and who, straight in the face of prevailing opinion, kept confidently proclaiming coming events.

To be sure, not all their predictions were fulfilled, especially in the precise manner they foretold. But, on the whole and in the large, their foresight was amazingly sound; at least they saw far more truly than any of their contemporaries. And the history of the succeeding centuries was not merely a judgment upon the peoples whose ways they condemned. It was a vindication of the insight of the prophets, an insight always characteristic of religion when faithful to its inherent genius.

For imbedded in their more limited view of a God who rules each particular event for his own immediate ends was a deeper insight—that the flux of history in the large moves within a framework determined by fixed and immutable moral principles, the laws of God's ultimate kingdom. And, more directly, that any individual or nation or generation which willfully violates those laws too persistently and too jubilantly does so to its own destruction. Human freedom to follow the dictates of desire is real, but it is bounded by definite and inexorable limits, the moral structure of the universe. For mankind, as for the individual, a too great defiance brings its inevitable penalty.

Where in all history shall we look for clearer proof of this truth than to our own world's life in this hour? Surely a generation which starves amidst a surfeit of plenty, which pauperizes millions in the most prosperous nation in history, which pays with suffering, chaos, tyranny, despair, the wages of the folly of war and greed—surely our generation should need no proof of the reality of God in history. In very literalness, the world's present agony is as unmistakable evidence of the fact and presence and reign of God as was the burning bush to Moses, or the still small voice to Elijah.

The present depression is the judgment of history upon our life. It is a revelation of the moral order of the universe, of what earlier generations would have preferred to call the will of God. It is history's stern reminder

that we *do* live in a world where material and selfish ideals cannot prevail, that ethical problems in some sense precede and determine economic and political problems, that the course of human history advances within the constraining structure of the moral design of God. And it proclaims to all who have ears to hear that, for nation, for community, for epoch, the wages of sin is death.

#### IV

2. Many may think this an exaggerated emphasis upon the God of the Moral Order, the God of history. More than one voice will protest: "Surely you have the matter all out of proportion. People to-day are weary enough without trumpeting the righteousness of God above their heads. We are confronting a generation baffled, confused, discouraged, exhausted. What it seeks and deserves is comfort, not condemnation, reassurance, not reproof, encouragement, not the wrath of God. Further, this is essentially the message of the Old Testament. But the New Testament declares to men a God of love and strength and hope. Give us the God of personal life."

Let it be affirmed clearly and at once that God *is* the Guide and Companion of the personal life, "closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet." He is precisely the ever-present, ever-active living Sustainer with whom our fathers felt themselves to have some measure of intimate commerce in experience. He is the most certain and most important of all realities. Here, again, the logic of the matter points the way to the deeper truth. For it should be clear to the most untrained intelligence that, if there be a God in this universe at all, he must be the one primal and supremely significant fact which gives to all else its existence and its meaning. And not merely the primal fact in the universe but the prior reality in all our experience. If he is at all, he *is* "closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet"—one without whose prior love we should never have known what it means to love. And so the plain man, untrammelled by the subtleties of sophistication, assumes. Further, he is one who is ever seeking to make himself known to men by every avenue of their multifarious experience, through nature, through the moral order, through our response to values, through personal communion.

But it is just because we are so concerned for this second neglected aspect of the character of God that we have so stressed the first. It is my conviction that to fail to give the relevance of theology in some such terms as these is to be traitorous to the central character of the Christian faith.

Our generation is exactly like an invalid suffering from a malignant growth, and guzzling patent medicines to cure the ills enumerated on the labels, when a major operation is needed. It is one of the indispensable functions of the church to be the spiritual physician for society, to seek to diagnose its ills and prescribe for their cure. And its duty is to tell the patient the truth, not what he wishes were true.

The truth is that there has been sin in our society—wholesale, unabashed, ruthless sin. The sin of gluttony for money and for power and for a specious prosperity; the sin of sharp and heartless business practice, of false objectives, of unlimited reliance on fundamentally unethical axioms—the sin of blindness which could not see the truth because it did not really love the right—such sin as exacts its wage not merely from the sinners, but from their fellow-humanity. It will not do to plead ignorance, unavoidable mistake. When a man carelessly sets fire to his neighbor's house, we do not forgive his ignorance; adults are expected to know that fire destroys. When a man deliberately looses germs upon a community, we do not plead unavoidable mistake; we know the havoc of disease. The laws of society's health are written as clearly across the pages of human history as the laws of nature or of physical health. And they are written in the words of the spiritual seers of mankind, and supremely in the mind of him whom we call Master. The agony of our generation is not the failure of ignorance, but of flaws of human character more blameworthy by far. This is the Humanism which has pulled our civilization to the brink of disaster—not the sophisticated Humanism of the intellectuals, but the practical Humanism of respected Christian ministers and elders who have worshiped the God of love on Sundays, and then have denied the God of truth and righteousness every day of the week in the way they have sought to organize his world and insinuate their own devices for the inexorable principles of his moral governance. It is possible that there has faded from our experience God as the solicitous Comrade of personal life because we have refused the recognition of God as the Sovereign of the world's life. And, by the same token, the recovery of the living experience of the Father of Love may wait on obedience to the manifest Will of the Guardian of Truth and Right.

May I press an analogy from another aspect of the Christian faith? Nothing is more wearisome, because more unreal, than the sentimental optimism which proclaims Christianity as a message of joy, of hope, of triumph, of unclouded sunshine—the Gospel of the Resurrection. To be sure, that is a half-truth; but it is one of that peculiar kind of half-truths which is considerably worse than no truth at all just by virtue of the fact



that it is the second half of a truth which depends for its validity wholly on being linked with the first half. Standing alone, it is definitely untrue. For Christianity *is* the message of the Resurrection; *but* of the Resurrection following on the Crucifixion. Or, more accurately, of the Crucifixion issuing in the Resurrection. It is not the message of a carefree joy, an easy optimism; but of the triumph of faith over intractable circumstance and agonizing tragedy. It was so in the experience of Jesus, and it must ever be so in his following. There can be no sound preaching of the gospel of the Resurrection which does not come as a sequel to the fearless and determined preaching of the meaning of the Cross. There can be no true realization of the meaning of hope save as it be born out of the experience of dark defeat and despair and vicarious suffering. The only pathway by which the human soul may come upon the Glorious Vision leads across the hill of Calvary.

Now, by the same token, men seek certainty of a personal and living God, but will not take the only path by which he may be come by. For the loving Father of Jesus' certainty is not a substitute for the God of the Old Testament, but his completion. He is the fuller portrait of the indignant Ruler of Amos' and Micah's and Isaiah's scorching judgments. And in that fuller portrayal all the lineaments of their true vision are assumed and reappear. The Christian comprehension of God achieves its climax in One who numbers the hairs of our heads and calls each one by name. But it rises to faith in him and enters into knowledge of him by the hard pathway of devoted service to the Sovereign of the Moral Order. A superficial and sentimental generation cries out for some genial shortcut to God; but there is no other path to him. This was Jesus' own conviction:—"If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, how shall they believe though one rose from the dead?"

## V

Let us understand why that must be so.

God does touch our lives in some measure through every experience; but—and this is the crucial point—not in the same way through each. Just as you and I do not behave toward a broken arm as we do toward a broken table, or seek to prevent the scourge of war as we seek to eliminate the scourge of malaria, no more does God act toward all his creation in precisely the same way. And it is of the genius of God's way with man that, as the character of the divine contact becomes more intimate, more personal, more significant, it becomes also more delicate, more readily disregarded,

neglected, denied. The man who jumps from a window knows that he has made a serious mistake. He may speak of the law of gravitation rather than a law of God, but he has run unmistakably upon the structure of reality. Here, the impact of God upon his life, though impersonal and indirect, cannot be denied. The society which builds its civilization in defiance of the principles of truth and honor and progress learns soon or late that it has made a serious mistake—to the cruel sorrow of its millions. But it is far easier to speak of “unavoidable human misjudgment” or to cast the blame on “chance.” The divine reproof speaks with a quieter voice, more easily disdained, though it gives, none the less, a command which *must* be obeyed. But the gentler and more personal appeals of the divine Spirit to our own—through beauty, through high ideals, through the call to devotion, to creation, to sacrifice—come with no imperious command; they may be wholly disregarded and denied if we wish it so. And, in this respect, God has elected to share the fate of those supreme values which most enrich and exalt human life, and which are the intimations of his purpose and his high hope for mankind. Beauty has no power to compel those who are persistently blind to her loveliness. The issues of a better society win no aid from those who are willfully deaf to their appeal. The cause of honor and justice and the good life for mankind suffers defeat from those who will not trust truth. So also with the Living God himself. Through all these means and more directly and immediately he is forever making his appeal to men’s devotion, asking entrance at the portal of human life. He does not force entrance, but he does speak. To those whose clatter of preoccupation drowns his voice or whose willfulness refuses entrance, he has no further appeal. There is a gracious restraint in the exercise of the divine constraint. But where admission is freely offered, he enters immediately to bless and to redeem.

And it is implicit in the manner of his self-giving that those who deny his obvious manifestations may be unable to recognize his more delicate disclosures. So also with all else in human life most worth possessing. He who does not thrill to the beauty of an autumn hillside may never appreciate the Madonna. He who is not touched by a Negro spiritual will never truly comprehend a Bach choral. He who is not won by the trusting arms of childhood will never know great love. He who cannot recognize nobility in a peasant’s devotion will never apprehend the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ. It may be that he who has not learned to acknowledge the hand of the Righteous God in Nature and in history shall never know the touch of the Divine Companion upon his shoulder.

## VI

Our generation, assuming the perspective of an earnest intellectual inquirer, has sought by tedious and methodical inductive argument to convince the mind of the existence of God. And in that perspective God becomes the last term of an arduous and technical chain of reasoning instead of the first fact of a vital religious experience. But God cannot be discovered that way. He must be recognized as present all along—in the world which gives us birth, in our knowing of that world, and especially in those rich and deep and rare insights into reality which furnish foretaste of what it lies within our human life to become. Then he is no longer a guest whom we consent to admit into our world of thought, rather tentatively and after severe scrutiny. He is acknowledged as the Source of the life of which we ourselves partake and of all that makes life lovely, the prior Initiator of all our seeking through whose courtesy we are admitted into the knowledge of himself and of all else worth knowing. That is the sound perspective. Only in that attitude can God be made sure.

This is the testimony of those who have known the life of religion most intimately from within. To the spiritual pathfinders of mankind, certainty of God has been not so much a conclusion of the intellect as the awakening to the deeper significance of familiar experience. Its mood has been not inquiry but receptivity. Its outcome has been not a discovery by the mind, but rather the obeisance of the whole spirit. Further, the avenues of commerce between the divine and ourselves are not one but many. More important, the traffic of those avenues moves less as an onward yearning toward an obscure and impassive Object than as the encompassing constraint of a freely given Presence. It is not by seeking that we find out God, but in living that we are found by him. Certainty of God is less the achieving of a conviction of the divine than a welcome of the coercion of the divine.

# Biblical Background in Palestine

MILLAR BURROWS

**I**N a store which caters to many tourists in Jerusalem they tell of an American lady who came in one day and asked for a good guidebook to Palestine. On being told that the best of all guidebooks to the Holy Land was the Bible, she said, "Oh, is Palestine mentioned in the Bible? Why didn't somebody tell me that before I left home?" Not all the visitors to Palestine are so ignorant. The motive which above all others brings travelers to that little country is undoubtedly the desire to see the places where the familiar events of the Bible story took place. Sometimes they are disappointed, because they have expected the wrong things and have not stayed along enough to appreciate the atmosphere and the life of the country. For most of them, however, the experience produces a new appreciation and understanding of the Book. A serious student with proper preparation and an intelligent purpose is sure to be abundantly rewarded by a sojourn in Palestine.

To be sure the country has changed a good deal since Bible times, especially in recent years. A lady who visited us while I was director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem had known the city twenty years ago, but had hardly seen it since then. To her great surprise she was quite unable to find her way about in it and said that with its banks, hotels, and cinemas it had become a new Jerusalem indeed. Automobiles and busses, tractors and threshing machines do not recall the days of Abraham.

In spite of such changes, however, much remains the same. In Jerusalem itself the new things are almost all in the new portion of the city. The old town within the walls has suffered relatively little change. The beggars, the blind, and even the lepers may be seen in the streets and poignantly bring back the frequent references to them in the Bible. In the smaller villages and in the open fields the life is still more reminiscent of the days of old. The shepherds with their flocks of fat-tailed sheep, their slings, and their rods and staves provide living illustrations of many a biblical passage. The black goats'-hair tents of the bedouins are probably exactly like the tent which Abraham pitched between Bethel and Ai—certainly much more like it than are the imposing mansions with which European painters have endowed the patriarch.

No person at all acquainted with the Bible can live for a year or for a

month in Palestine, even if he does no systematic studying, and not experience many moments of keen realization, when on this or that spot associated with events in biblical history the old familiar story comes back to him with a new meaning, or when the chance observation of some characteristic Palestinian custom calls to mind with new appreciation a familiar phrase or passage of the Bible. One day, for example, I happened to glance out of my office window just as a large flock of sheep passed by, coming from Herod's Gate, where many sheep are bought and sold. When they reached the corner of a wall across the street from our building, one of the shepherds took his stand beside the wall, and the other drove the sheep so that they had to pass, one by one, between the wall and the first shepherd, who laid his rod upon the back of each sheep as it passed, evidently counting his flock to see that all were there. This, it occurred to me, was the practice of "causing them to pass under the rod," referred to in Leviticus 27. 32, and used by the prophet Ezekiel as a figure of divine judgment (Ezekiel 20. 37). Later we saw sheep counted in the same way at the customs office at Allenby Bridge, where the road from Jericho crosses the Jordan. Similar practices, of course, were used in a different sense and in other connections to express God's care for his people.

Some of the marriage customs of Bible times persist to the present day in Palestine. One of our servants in Jerusalem was quite satisfied with her position and not at all anxious to leave it and get married, but her family insisted that she was of marriageable age, and marry she must. One of the reasons urged upon her was that her younger sister could not get married until she did. "And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn" (Genesis 29. 26). The bride's week referred to in the same chapter is also still observed. While it lasts the young wife must do no work and make no visits, but her friends and relatives come to visit her.

Again and again such illustrations of biblical customs come to one's attention in the Holy Land. The watchmen's towers in the vineyards, the deserted, withered booths in which the laborers used to find shade during the last vintage, a peasant plowing with an ox and an ass hitched to the same plow, the muzzled oxen threshing grain, the crackling of thorns burning under a pot, and countless other sights of almost every day give to familiar words a new significance. Figures of speech which seem obscure against the background of our Western life become vivid in the East. Up in the Anti-Lebanon one day Professor Crawford, of the American University of Beirut, pointed out to me two lines of goats descending

the mountain opposite us and reminded me of the verse in the Song of Solomon (4. 1), "Thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear on Mount Gilead." The comparison of the beloved's teeth to newly washed sheep (4. 2) has often come to mind as I have looked down from a height into a valley and seen the lines of white sheep, like strings of little pearls, beside some spring.

Journeying about the country as the students of the American School of Oriental Research do on their school trips gives an acquaintance with Palestinian geography which affords many new insights into biblical history. Distances and differences of altitude which have been familiar as abstract facts become concrete realities, especially when one journeys, as the patriarchs did, afoot or by horse or donkey. My students and I had known before coming to Palestine that Jerusalem was twenty-five hundred feet above and the Dead Sea nearly thirteen hundred feet below sea level, but when we made the descent ourselves and felt the difference between the clear mountain air of Jerusalem and the oppressive, stifling heat of the Jordan valley, we realized the significance of these figures.

Narratives also which had previously left but a vague, confused impression became astonishingly real and vivid when seen against their original background. Looking across the vale of Elah from Socoh toward Azekah we could easily imagine the struggle between the young Israelite kingdom of the highlands and the Philistines of the plain, especially the battle which took place in the valley that lay before us, when a shepherd lad from the high plateau behind us overcame the giant champion of Gath, whence we had just come. In the same way many incidents of biblical history became clearer when we crossed the great plain of Esdraelon and saw the range of Carmel on one hand and Gilboa on the other, or walked over the mountains that are round about Jerusalem.

Of course the same thing is true of any history or literature. Traveling in England makes the masterpieces of English literature and the course of English history much more clear and many times more interesting. To live in the land which produced the Bible, however, is particularly illuminating, because Palestine is very different from what most of us are used to. Those who come from California are the exceptions which prove the rule. For them every new turn in the road recalls some familiar landscape at home—at least it was so with the Californians in our group. They were constantly saying, "That's just like such and such a place at home, only of course on a smaller scale." The rest of us, however, found the scenery and the climate new and strange.

The lack of trees and the scarcity of water are perhaps the most strik-



ing features of the country. In ancient times there were many more trees than there are now. Probably there were never such forests as we know in America, yet at Shiloh a charcoal burner has been found with pieces of charcoal, indicating the existence of large trees in that vicinity in relatively recent times. When the hills were not so bare as they are now, the winter rains did not simply run down the slopes and gullies and go to waste as they do to-day. The springs must have been for this reason more abundant and more perennial than they are now. Yet even so the country has always been subject to shortage of water, especially on the high central plateau. In ancient times as now the people depended upon cisterns very largely for their water in the summer time, and before they learned to make cisterns and store the winter rains in them the plateau was very sparsely settled. Towns like Shechem and Jerusalem had springs, but these were not generally sufficient for a very large population.

Often in the Bible we find passages which presuppose a limited supply of water: the disputes of herdsmen over wells, the joy of travelers in finding springs and their disappointment when a promising wady proves to have no water in it, the contrast between the living water of a spring and the flat, insipid liquid in a cistern—these and many similar aspects of the life reflected in the Bible are familiar and significant to one who lives in Palestine. One hardly knows how to appreciate good water until one has spent a summer in a place like Jerusalem and learned to treasure every drop of it. A friend of ours who boasted that he had bathed, shaved, and brushed his teeth with a glass of water may have exaggerated slightly, but he had learned that in Jerusalem one must be economical with water. Saving the water from baths to water the flowers or wash the floors would seem both shocking and absurd to us at home, but in Jerusalem it is the commonest and mildest of the way devised to make every drop do full or double duty. The natives, to be sure, are very wasteful when they can be. They slop and splash the water about and let it run with no attempt to save it while they have it; then, when the supply gives out, they simply manage somehow to get along without it. Their feeling seems to be, "I might as well enjoy this while I can; nobody else will try to save it, so why should I?" But that is just a typical example of their fatalistic carelessness and lack of social co-operation in everything. At any rate, one learns in Palestine how precious water is when it is scarce, and many verses of the Bible acquire new force from this experience.

Another feature of life in the Near East which was the same in ancient times as it is now is the common use of many different languages. In

part, this is due to the fact that many of the people have emigrated to America and returned. Even in remote villages it is surprising how often one meets men who have been to America and who hail one with delight in terms more familiar than elegant. Not all of the polylingualism of the people is the result of travel, however. Even those who stay at home have many contacts with foreign merchants and tourists, and the various native elements of the population have several languages of their own. An interesting demonstration of the linguistic attainments of Palestinians was afforded by a conversation on the night of the Samaritan Passover on Mount Gerizim. We had been invited to visit the tent of one of the Samaritans while the sheep were roasting. On account of the decline of the community he had moved to Tel Aviv and there had married a Jewess. Until quite recently that would have been a thing unheard of, but now the Jews and Samaritans are beginning to mingle and even intermarry, because the Samaritans recognize their need of new blood, and the Jews are glad of any ally against the Arabs. Our host and his wife in speaking to each other or to me used Arabic. He had picked up enough Hebrew and German to use a mixture of those languages with a young German Jew who had been invited with us into the tent. The wife spoke French with some of our party and Ladino (the old Jewish Spanish) with another Jew who came in. She told us that she could also speak Greek very well. While we were there a son of the high priest came into the tent. He spoke English with us and the ancient Samaritan dialect of Hebrew with our host and other Samaritans.

While most of the fellahin speak only Arabic, the merchants and chauffeurs in the cities have at their tongues' ends sometimes as many as ten languages. Their vocabularies and the range of the ideas they can express, of course, are limited. One secret of their linguistic versatility also is the fact that they are quite unembarrassed by our self-conscious anxiety to speak correctly. It is sometimes said that the native Syrian or Palestinian really has no mother tongue: he speaks many languages, but speaks no language well. Nevertheless he has a retentiveness of memory, a fluency and readiness of utterance, and an ability to switch without confusion from one language to another which are the admiration and despair of any ordinary American.

This ability to chatter and do business in half a dozen tongues is no new thing. The particular languages used to-day are not what they were in former times. Turkish is no longer the language of the ruling power, and in Palestine French is giving way to English as the European language

most affected by the upper classes. Before the Turkish period other languages prevailed, but Palestine has always had the gift of tongues. Seeing public notices printed in the three official languages (English, Arabic, and Hebrew), one recalls the sign placed over the cross of Jesus bearing an inscription in Greek and Latin and Hebrew. At a still earlier time, doubtless, one might have found merchants using the Egyptian and Assyrian languages in addition to their native Hebrew or Aramaic.

In such ways as these one comes close in Palestine to the life portrayed in the Bible. Still closer is one brought by visiting archæological excavations. The great sloping rampart of stone at Jericho, crowned with a wall of sun-baked bricks, the city gates at Balatah (Shechem?), Tell Beit Mirsim (Kiriath-Sepher), and Tell en-Nasbeh (certainly a mighty city, whether its name was Mizpah or Attarah or Gibeon), the huge mud rampart of Hazor, the deep fosse and steep slope of Tell el-Ajjul, south of Gaza, the "Jebusite" wall and the "Davidic" tower on Ophel at Jerusalem, and other remains of ancient fortifications unearthed at various places enable us to see how the cities of the land were protected in olden times. Sometimes changes in political conditions are reflected in the changing styles of fortification. The relatively light walls of the Hebrew Kingdoms appear in places above the much thicker and more powerful defenses of the days when there was no king in Israel and each of the great Canaanite cities was a law unto itself. At other places the succession of different foreign masters finds expression in the way the walls are built in different periods.

Something of the daily life of bygone ages is shown by dyeing vats, wine presses, silos, mills, cisterns, hearths, pots and vessels of one kind and another. Even the foundation walls of the people's houses tell something of the way they lived and the degree of economic or cultural advancement they enjoyed. A vivid touch of everyday life is given by such homely articles as the set of dice found at Tell Beit Mirsim.

Not many objects of great artistic interest are found in Palestine. No Tutankhamen tomb has yet been found there or is likely to be found. Things made of wood, paper, leather, or cloth could not last through the ages in Palestine as they did in Egypt, and those made of gold and silver or precious stones seem to have been carried off by robbers and conquerors. Thothmes III has left us a list of the spoils he took at Megiddo.

Once in a while, however, things turn up which show that the ancient Palestinians were not strangers to culture. Seals like that of "Shema, Servant of Jeroboam," from Megiddo, and the seal of Jaazaniah recently found at Tell en-Nasbeh prove that the ancient art of gem-cutting was known

in Palestine. The silver bowl and the lovely silver ladle found at Tell Jemmeh, and now the ancient mural paintings of Teleilat el-Ghassul and the ivory tablets of Samaria, with their exquisite carving and bits of inlaid colored glass, show artistic influences at work in Palestine.

To be sure, the remains are fragmentary. Only at Jerash in Trans-jordan, where our own school has been excavating in co-operation with Yale University, is there a considerable number of buildings sufficiently preserved to be of much interest architecturally, and most of these are of a later period than the Bible story reaches. The beautiful mosaic pavements are from churches of the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries. The temples and some of the other architectural remains are earlier, but neither they nor the similar remains at other places have much to do directly with the Bible. What has been found so far from earlier times seems poor and meager in comparison with what is found in Egypt or in Babylonia. Yet bit by bit it helps to piece together a true picture of the life of Jews and Gentiles in the land.

Unfortunately a visit to Palestine helps much less in the study of the New Testament than in the Old. Much of the New Testament history took place outside of Palestine; for the rest little geographical detail is given, and still less that makes any particular difference. After all, the Sermon on the Mount might have been preached as well on one hill as on another, and its meaning is not affected by any geographical considerations. Most of its sayings and the parables likewise were probably repeated often and in many different villages. Going about among the villages helps one to realize what the common people who heard Jesus gladly were like, though even here one must remember that the Arab fellahin of to-day are not the Jewish people of two thousand years ago. Since Jesus drew his illustrations from the everyday life of the people, many of the old customs still preserved recall his figures: the shepherd carrying a lamb, women grinding at a mill, sowers and reapers in the fields, fishermen mending their nets, even robbers on the road to Jericho.

In one respect archæology is making an important contribution to our understanding of New Testament history. The Gospels, while referring occasionally to pagan ways, leave the general impression that Palestine had been very little influenced by Roman life or by Hellenism. Josephus and the Talmud help to correct this impression, but it has remained for archæology to show how pagan certain parts of Palestine had become in New Testament times. The excavation of Samaria is giving us a good idea of Herod's favorite city and showing what a thoroughly Roman place he made of it.

Scythopolis (Beisan), Sephoris, Cæsarea, Ascalon, Eleutheropolis (Beit Jibrin), and Jerusalem itself help to complete the picture. To be sure, the orthodox Jews held themselves aloof as far as possible from Gentile influence, and the smaller villages were doubtless still intensely Jewish, yet the presence in their midst of Roman cities, with temples, theaters, baths, and hippodromes, made the Jews of Palestine almost as well acquainted with the pagan culture of the day as were their brethren of the Dispersion. If all this sheds but little light upon particular verses in the New Testament, it none the less promotes a truer understanding of the whole by giving us a better knowledge of the country and the times. Aside from this, not much has been contributed to the study of the New Testament by Palestinian archæology or topography.

Even in the Old Testament it is the military and political history which is most illuminated by a sojourn in the land. From the coming of the Israelites into the land of Moab, their history has many contacts with places we can still identify. Medeba, Heshbon, and Elealeh still bear their ancient names with only slight alteration. Visiting these places on one of our school trips we found at Elealeh a large bedouin camp which doubtless looked much like the tents of Israel seen by Balaam. I wanted to take a picture of it, but was prevented by an angry bedouin, who dashed up on his horse and ordered us off. My efforts to explain to him the use and purpose of my kodak were evidently as puzzling to him as they would have been amusing to anyone who understood both Arabic and photography. Perhaps he thought that we were Zionists trying to steal his country from him. At any rate he refused to be mollified, and some of our party were so disturbed by his demeanor that they would not stop to look at Heshbon. Going on to Mount Nebo, we ate our lunch in the midst of bedouins of a nobler sort than those of Elealeh.

The sites of Sodom and Gomorrah remain unknown, yet Pere Malon's work at Teleilat el-Ghassul has shown us something of the culture which existed in the valley of the Jordan in the days of Lot and Abraham. Jericho, while it has not answered all the questions raised by the account of its capture by the Israelites, has yielded a great mass of material for reconstructing its early history. The site of ancient Ai has not been thoroughly excavated, but on one of our school trips we visited it and with the aid of the description in Garstang's "Joshua-Judges" tried to visualize the course of Joshua's attack upon the city. On another trip we visited el-Jib, generally accepted as the site of Gibeon, and afterward drove down the Vale of Ajalon through Beth-horon the Upper and Beth-horon the Lower, where



Joshua drove the shattered forces of his enemy on the famous day when even the sun and moon are said to have stood still at his command. The scene of Deborah's and Barak's triumph over the Canaanites by the River Kishon was visited in the course of several trips; from Taanach or Megiddo one can see across Esdraelon to Mount Tabor, where Barak rallied the Israelites before descending to do battle "in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo."

Most of the places named in the accounts of Israel's struggles with the Philistines are known and were visited by us during the year. In the country between Hebron and the Dead Sea we visited the scenes of David's outlaw days, when Saul pursued him from one refuge to another. The steep slope of Ophel, where ancient Jerusalem stood, just south of the present city, helped us to visualize the conquest of the Jebusite stronghold by David and its many sieges in the subsequent centuries. Isaiah's description of the route which the expected Assyrian army might follow in its swift advance upon Jerusalem, while still not clear in all details, gained in power and meaning for us when we walked and rode on donkey back through Michmash, Geba, Azmaveth, and Anathoth. Walking through the Siloam tunnel and seeing the place from which was cut the famous inscription which I had seen in the museum at Constantinople added much to my interest in the history of the days of Hezekiah, when the Assyrians had already overthrown the northern kingdom and were threatening Judah too, and when the prophet Isaiah was giving his valued but not always heeded counsel. Such incidents and passages as these become intensely real when visualized in their proper setting. Unfortunately they are not the most important part of the Old Testament, at least from the point of view of spiritual value.

Frequently on our school trips we were concerned with matters interesting in themselves, yet not of any vital importance for the appreciation of the Bible. Picking up potsherds on the slopes of an ancient mound and learning from them in what periods the site was occupied becomes a fascinating sport. Visitors on our trips sometimes caught the spirit of the game and searched excitedly for bits of "Middle Bronze" or "Early Iron" pottery. For the identification of biblical sites this is of great importance, yet frequently the sites identified are those of cities mentioned only once or twice and not of great historical consequence. Such topographical research, for all its scientific value, is not necessarily contributory to a better interpretation of important biblical passages. Examining a bit of ancient masonry and trying to determine whether it is Solomonic or Herodian or



the work of the Crusaders or the Turks is also interesting but of no far-reaching consequence for exegesis or edification. Absorption in details like these may be much like spending hours in trying to determine just where Saul went when he hunted for his father's lost donkeys. He did not find them anyway, and they got home without him.

One of the most certain sites in Palestine is "Jacob's Well," at the mouth of the valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. It is interesting and even inspiring to think that on this very spot the conversation between Jesus and the woman of Samaria took place, yet—quite apart from any question as to the historicity of the incident—the main point of that conversation was the fact that those who worship God in spirit and in truth are not concerned with questions of locality. There is not a little irony in the situation when we emphasize the identification of a place where Jesus said that neither here nor in Jerusalem should men localize religion!

From the religious point of view it seems that the portions of the Bible which are most illuminated by living in Palestine are those which are least important. From the standpoint of literary appreciation, however, this is by no means true. When one is not concerned with religious teaching or with historical problems but with the enjoyment of a fine piece of literature, one can see and feel the great Old Testament stories in all their fierce, heroic power. Samson's carrying the gates of Gaza to the mountain that is east of (before) Hebron assumes truly gigantic proportions when one realizes that Gaza is on the coast, while Hebron is three hours away by automobile and three thousand feet above sea level. Elijah's contest with the priests of Baal is more majestic than ever when one knows Mount Carmel. Abandoning the mood of meticulous research, not asking or caring just where the dramatic event took place or whether it ever really happened at all, one can stand at the traditional "Place of Sacrifice" and live through in imagination that great struggle, from the prophet's challenge of the priests of Baal until he slaughters them at the foot of the mountain by the River Kishon, and then the waiting for the rain cloud and the race across the plain before the storm. I have seen a great storm coming over the sea by Haifa at the end of Carmel, and have wondered, as our car sped across the plain, whether we should be caught. Ahab did not have an automobile, and his haste must have been the greater, lest his chariot should be mired, as the chariots of the Canaanites had been when the Kishon rose to overwhelm them and the stars in their courses fought for Barak and Deborah.

Of course to regard the Bible as literature and to study its geographical

background as we should study that of a novel or a play does not mean that we consider it mere fiction. No competent historian now would minimize its value as a source-book for a very important chapter in human history. Palestinian archæologists of all schools agree that excavation has increased rather than diminished their confidence in the Bible as a historical record. My point is not that the Bible is mere fiction, but that it is not mere history. Even for the historian, indeed, its most valuable material is not in the form of annals, but is found in the literary, often poetic expression of the ideals and hopes and memories of the people. But frequently what is least important either for religion or for history is magnificent as literature, and the appreciation of these portions too is heightened by acquaintance with their setting.

Even from a purely religious point of view, let me hasten to say, it would be misleading to say that nothing which has been found in Palestine is important. The religious background of the Bible, so to speak, is made much clearer by archæology. The great "high place" at Petra, the images of Astarte found in many excavations, the foundations of ancient sanctuaries dug up here and there (if one can only be sure that the building in question really was a sanctuary), the representations of deities on stelæ and later on coins, all supplement and correct the notions we derive from the literary sources.

Occasionally the natural setting helps to understand or at least to appreciate the work and message of a great religious leader. A visit to Tekoa makes more vivid the contrast between a shepherd's stark existence on the edge of the plateau above the wilderness of Judah and the thronging, busy, relatively comfortable life of such a city as Bethel must have been.

Much still survives in the religious life of Palestine and Syria which helps to understand the practices and ideas presupposed by the Old Testament. Sacred trees and groves are still quite common in connection with the tombs of saints, whose veneration plays a great rôle in the real religion of the peasants. Frequently, though not invariably, these are on the tops of prominent hills—literally "high places." While the particular worthies honored by these tombs are for the most part relatively recent (generally Moslem or at the earliest Christian), the places where they are buried, and where the faithful pray and leave their votive offerings, have probably in many cases been regarded as sacred from time immemorial.

Many customs also now embedded in the rites of Christianity and Islam have doubtless a history reaching back into pre-Christian or even pre-Israelite times. After the annual ceremony of foot-washing in the

Armenian church at Jerusalem I heard an English lady say, "It's tremendously sort of traditional, don't you know." Inane as the remark sounded, it expressed a feeling that one often has in Palestine. At Ramallah, a few miles north of Jerusalem, we attended on the Oriental Palm Sunday an observance which has probably come down from ancient times, though now connected with a Christian festival. In an enclosed field by the church the youths and maidens of the village gathered in gala attire and danced, the men on one side of the enclosure and the women on the other. A group of young men with a piper danced over and over again a gay and agile dance, led by a youth carrying a white umbrella, who proved to be the houseboy of an eminent American archæologist. The girls, who sang instead of having a piper, had two or three different dances, one in which they circled around, with several little children in the center, and another in which two lines, facing each other, alternately advanced and retreated. Formerly, we were told, the dancing took place on the village threshing floor. The costume of the Ramallah women is the most picturesque in Palestine; it is rapidly being abandoned by the younger generation, but on this day every girl was wearing it.

The most important example of an ancient rite preserved through all the centuries with little alteration is the Samaritan observance of the Passover on Mount Gerizim, to which reference has already been made. It affords a most interesting and dramatic commentary on the accounts of the Passover in the Bible. At sunset the elders stand in a row, with the high priest in front of them, chanting prayers. The sheep are killed by having their throats cut in the traditional manner; scalding water is poured over them and the fleece is plucked off; then they are cleaned and duly prepared, the sinews are removed from the thighs, salt is rubbed into the flesh, and the right forelegs are cut off for the priests. Meanwhile a fire has been kept burning in a deep, stone-lined pit; this is allowed to die down, and the sheep, spitted on long poles, are lowered into the pit. A wooden grating, through which the ends of the poles protrude, is placed over the mouth of the pit and covered with mats and mud. For several hours the sheep are left to roast in this huge, primitive fireless cooker. When we witnessed the ceremony the sheep were put into the pit and it was sealed before the fire had entirely gone out; consequently some of the poles burned through, and the sheep fell into the fire and were burned. When the covering was removed and the misfortune was discovered, a ladder was lowered into the steaming pit, and two or three men in succession, with cloths over their faces and big gloves on their hands, climbed down to rescue the meat.

Vociferous disputes ensued over the number of sheep that had been recovered. Supposedly at midnight, but actually at about half past ten when we were there, the meat is carried to the tents and devoured in haste, as the Scriptures prescribe. Other rites precede and follow this central portion of the observance, but we did not see them.

An occasion like this enables one to slip back bodily into a long vanished past, provided one has sufficient imagination to ignore the many grotesque and incongruous touches of modernity in the scene (youths smoking cigarettes, policemen with guns, and of course the ubiquitous American tourist). But such occasions are rare. On the whole it is only a detail here and a detail there that is to be gleaned from the present life of the people or from archæology.

For scholarship no detail is unimportant. Big things can be correctly understood only by getting the little things right. Otherwise scientific procedure would be a tremendous and expensive waste of time. Visitors to an excavation, seeing that little has been found but broken pots and ugly foundations, have sometimes said that it was wrong to spend so much money on all this digging. They have not realized that only by such patient and painstaking work can the life and culture of bygone days be revealed. Not every detail is equally significant, but only by carefully collecting and studying all the facts can we discover which details have real significance, and often what is worthless in itself becomes important in connection with other facts. Slowly but surely the patient study of these little things is reconstructing for us the life out of which the Bible grew, and in the light of which it is to be understood.

Yet, when all is said and done, perhaps the greatest of all the values of a visit to Palestine is the new sense of reality imparted to the ancient writings. One who returns with this to his classroom or pulpit in America is conscious of a strong desire to pass on something of it to his students or congregation.

# Religion and the World Order

PHILIP S. RICHARDS

THE problems of religion and ethics are to-day most commonly approached from what may be called the sociological angle. The direct relation of the individual to God or the universe is seldom discussed. We are obsessed with economic and political theories, which now play a large, and often a decisive, part in controversies from which, in any previous generation, they would have been scrupulously excluded as irrelevant and tending only to confuse the issue. Thus, the typically anti-religious philosophy of materialism is, for the first time in history, advocated not simply as offering the most rational and coherent account of the sum of things, but as indissolubly bound up with a particular scheme for the organization of men in society; and this curious union between communism and materialism is only the outstanding example of a tendency that may be seen at work in many other quarters. In particular, those who attack Christianity on general philosophical grounds will be found, in almost every case, to be equipped, not merely with an alternative theory of the universe, but also with some specific solution of our social and economic problems.

The disadvantages of this state of things are fairly obvious. It can hardly be denied that it does in fact obscure the real issues in dispute. In our cooler moments we must surely agree that the ultimate nature of reality is not seriously affected by the principles on which human society is organized. Materialism, if true at all, must be equally true whether men are governed by kings or by a dictatorship of the proletariat. Such a pronouncement has all the appearance of a truism, even if it is a truism that is often ignored: but the error against which it is a protest unfortunately conceals itself under far subtler and more specious disguises. It often takes the form of suggesting that a religion which was appropriate and credible in the feudal society of the Middle Ages is no longer tenable under the conditions of modern industrialism. Broadly speaking, it has led to a widespread confusion between the causes and the grounds of belief. At any time, and under any circumstance, it is hard to disentangle the two; to say how much of a man's beliefs is due to his environment, and how much to reasoned conviction; but at least it has hitherto been assumed that it was desirable, and in some degree possible, to discount the influence of the environment. To-day the attempt has been abandoned by many

thinkers in despair; or perhaps it would be truer to say that they have made up their minds to concentrate on the environment, in the conviction that nothing else matters.

The reasons for this change of attitude are manifold, but it is not necessary to mention more than two or three of the most important. Theoretically, science—and especially the science of psychology—has shown us how enormous is the influence of the environment both in education and in social life; while, on the practical side, there seems to be almost no limit to the extent to which, with the aid of science, we may hope to control or modify the environment. Even more important, in their effect on the “detached” or academic frame of mind which used to be thought essential to the consideration of abstract questions, are the economic changes which, since the war, have affected the lives of the intelligentsia in Western Europe and America. To put the matter in a nutshell, the feeling of security, which used to be the birthright of the professional and thinking classes, has gone, apparently never to return. It is not merely that their incomes are smaller and worth less. They have an uneasy sense that the whole present economic and social system rests on insecure foundations; and they cannot but be aware that it is being attacked by bitter, relentless, and confident foes.

In their reaction to this situation they have fallen, in the main, into two classes. The majority have tried, with more or less success, to convince themselves and others that the system is, after all, the best that can be devised, that its defects can be remedied, and that, after a period of distress, prosperity and social peace will return. They may of course be right in this view; but in the meantime they have lost that detachment from sordid considerations, that disinterested concern for the things of the mind, which used to be their hall-mark. They have become class-conscious; they dabble in social service; economic questions bulk larger than any others in their thoughts and conversation, which is not surprising, considering the rapacity of the tax collector and the difficulty of keeping domestic servants. The other class consists of those who have, to put the matter bluntly, gone over to the enemy. Realizing that their privileged position, and with it all the “cultural values” of art, literature, and idealism are threatened, instead of fighting what they believe to be a losing battle, they have accepted the view that all questions are ultimately economic, and they are prepared to sacrifice all these values in the interests of “social justice” and equality. Accordingly they adopt some form of the socialist or communist creed. Mr. Middleton Murry’s little book on the *Necessity of*



*Communism*, with its frank appeal to his readers to "be on the winning side" in the inevitable revolution, is a curious *exposé* of the psychology of these people.

Now I would suggest that both these classes are, in different degrees, guilty of what M. Julien Benda has called "*la trahison des clercs*." The business of the "clerks," of the intellectual and cultured classes in every age, is precisely to assert and maintain the existence in man of interests which are not material, and therefore not economic; and this duty is the more imperative when the economic and material foundations of society are shaken. Pre-eminently does the duty fall on those who are clerks in the narrower, original sense of the "clergy"; that is, on those who claim at all, like the mediæval "clerks," to represent religion as well as intellect. After all, a third kind of reaction to the present crisis, radically different from those we have already described, is possible to men who believe in their hearts that man does not live by bread alone. The educated classes in the decline and fall of the Roman Empire were in a situation not essentially different from ours. They were taxed out of existence; society was visibly collapsing round them; the world resounded with the tramp of the advancing hordes of barbarism. Yet they did not comfort themselves with vain hopes that the Empire might still be bolstered up and survive: still less did they dream of abandoning a crumbling civilization and throwing in their lot with the young and vigorous enemies of the old order to which they owed everything that they valued. The more visibly and unmistakably the outward fabric of society was doomed, and with it all their hopes and comfort and security, the more resolutely they retired into the citadel of the soul. "What do you wish to know?" Saint Augustine asks himself in a passage of the Soliloquies, that cannot be too often quoted. "God and the Soul." "Nothing more than this?" "This and this only." Moreover, the same question was asked, and essentially the same answer was given, by the philosophers of the Empire, to whatever school they belonged.

Without attempting to push the parallel too far, we may reasonably ask why, in a time when the aspect of the external world is so discouraging, we hear so little of any similar attempt to revive the inner life. Even the churches, which might have been expected to seize an opportunity for turning the thoughts of men from the things seen which are temporal to the things unseen which are eternal, have preferred on the whole to dissipate their energies in spasmodic attempts to improve conditions, rather than urge men to seek a refuge from the storms of time in the realm of the "unconditioned." But the complete answer to our question cannot be

found in the decay of religious belief, widespread as that undoubtedly is; for under the Empire, as we have already seen, the inner life was cultivated quite as assiduously by men who had no sort of belief in the supernatural, as it was in the Christian Church. Something besides faith in the ordinary sense seems almost to have vanished from the world; something which enabled Christians and Pagans alike to view the perishing social order with entire detachment and to fling themselves with superb confidence on a world order which in many cases they thought to be quite indifferent to man. Those of our intellectual leaders who have no use for the consolations of religion have quite as little for the consolations of philosophy. Instead of contemplating the spectacle of the universe, we find them feverishly engaged in writing tracts on socialism or against war, or propounding schemes for educating the young in such a way as shall protect them in advance against the horrors of chastity or Christianity. This change in the orientation of human thought (if we may so describe it) is of comparatively recent date. It is barely forty years since the late F. H. Bradley published his *Appearance and Reality*; and yet even to turn its delightful pages is to plunge into a different era in the history of thought, an era in which the distorting shadows of social and economic problems had not yet crept up onto the high tablelands of pure philosophy.

The change, I suppose, might fairly be ascribed to a loss of faith in the value and importance of the individual; and, so far as concerns merely secular philosophy, it is perhaps a natural consequence of that trend of scientific thought to which a passing allusion has already been made. "The individual," according to Mr. H. G. Wells, "saves himself by losing himself. . . . In the scientific interpretation of life he forgets himself as Tom, Dick or Harry, and discovers himself as Man." In the religious interpretation of life, however, it is surely surprising that the same tendency should be observable. Religion, and especially Christianity (in spite of Communistic editions of the New Testament), is primarily and ultimately an affair of the individual soul, and when it ceases to be that it ceases to be religion. How then is it that—except in the pages of a few lonely thinkers, and in the somewhat desperate and catastrophic theology of Messrs. Barth and Brunner—the relation of the individual soul to God is seldom made the direct subject of religious philosophy?

A study of the current controversy between Christianity and its opponents leads to the conclusion that one of the most vital issues—and an issue that especially concerns the individual soul in its loneliness—is seldom seriously discussed, but is tacitly conceded by the Christian and tacitly

assumed by the other side. I mean the question of what used to be called "a particular Providence," which I prefer for certain reasons (and chiefly on account of some highly unphilosophical notions associated with the old-fashioned understanding of the phrase) to describe as the problem of the relation of the individual soul to the world order. The problem is posited unescapably for Christians by our Lord's pronouncement to his disciples: "The very hairs of your head are all numbered"; and, even apart from such distinct and definite utterances, the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God raises the whole issue. Nor would it be too much to say that for simple-minded people, and, in a different form, for the most highly trained philosopher, we have here the central difficulty of a religious view of life. It is, no doubt, rendered peculiarly acute for millions of people at the present day by the soulless working of economic laws in an industrial civilization—a point that is very clearly and forcibly made by Mr. Walter Lippmann in his *Preface to Morals*—but, philosophically speaking, the difficulty is, and must always be, coextensive with human life in a world which is largely under the dominion of pain, misfortune, disease, disaster, and death. There is ample occasion in any generation, though never perhaps more than in the modern world, for such a justification of religion as Plotinus attempted in his two tracts *Concerning Providence*.

The arguments against belief in an overruling Providence fall into two groups, according as they are based on abstract *à priori* reasoning, or on the experience of life. The former must be dealt with first, since it is idle to discuss whether in fact any tokens of divine guidance can be discerned in the course of events if the bare possibility of such guidance has to be rejected on philosophic or scientific principles. These *à priori* objections are certainly very formidable on a first view. They can be expressed in many different forms of words, but they all amount, in the long run, to an assertion that everything that happens is bound by an unbreakable chain of causation to everything that has happened before it, and to everything that will happen after it, so that the history of the universe down to its minutest detail is inevitably determined, and could not possibly be other than it is. This doctrine is known as Determinism, and it is worth remarking that, though it is best known to the modern mind as a scientific principle or postulate, it has also had a long and somewhat grim religious history under the name of Predestination. This should be especially borne in mind because, as we shall see later, the question of the interposition of Providence in human affairs is far more delicate and complicated than it seems at first sight; and (to put the matter crudely) it would be just as fatal

to the cause of religion to insist that God intervenes too powerfully in the course of the world, as to deny that he can intervene at all. Room must somehow be left for human free will; or, as Plotinus expressed it, "Providence must not be such that we are nothing."

Now it must be admitted that there is no answer to the logic of determinism, in either its scientific or its Calvinistic form. But for that very reason, paradoxical as it may sound, it does not require an answer. It proves too much. It proves, for instance, that I am bound by an inexorable necessity to believe that my will is free. For, if I do hold that belief, the determinist is highly illogical in trying to persuade me that I could believe otherwise than as I do. However, such logic-chopping is altogether beside the mark. What we are concerned with is to remove, as far as possible, the really weighty and effective objections to the Christian doctrine of Providence, and this objection, overwhelming as it seems, carries in truth no weight at all. No scientific thinker, however convinced he may be theoretically of the truth of determinism, ever acts as if he believed it true: and no religious man could logically be led by determinism to abandon his faith, for, as we have already hinted, the foreknowledge of God, in which presumably he believes, would, if pushed to its logical issue, lead him to precisely the same conclusion. It is, indeed, commonly asserted that the progressive verification of the scientific belief in the reign of law, has made it increasingly difficult to believe in God's over-ruling providence; but this assertion, if true, only affords a fresh instance of the common failure to distinguish between the causes and the reasons of men's convictions. The Laws of Universal Causation and the Uniformity of Nature are assumed as the basis of all scientific experiment, and could therefore hardly be established by scientific discoveries. Indeed they are taken for granted in all our conscious actions, and their truth, in so far as they are true, is self-evident as soon as they are stated and understood.

I think, then, that we may discount the difficulties which arise from pure determinism, since they press with equal force on any theory of human life; and, in any case, a theological determinism offers as coherent a system as a naturalistic. Calvin and Mahomet were as thoroughgoing necessitarians as Karl Marx himself. If, in spite of this, we are asked how the truth of the Uniformity of Nature can be consistent with any sort of divine influence on the course of events, the answer must be that that principle is true, and self-evidently true, only at a certain level of experience. It is a postulate, a necessary condition of the scientific interpretation of life, but it is not therefore to be elevated into an ultimate metaphysical principle.

For the scientific view is neither ultimate nor adequate to the whole of reality. It is indeed peculiarly abstract; and ignores, because it is incompetent to deal with them, all those aspects of reality which are not subject to measurement. The things which can, in any sense, be weighed, numbered or measured, are far from forming the whole or even the major part of the reality that falls within human experience. To suppose that they have a higher degree of reality than anything else that we know is a natural and pardonable delusion, but it is a delusion none the less. It is, for instance, a simple fact that the subject matter of human psychology (which embraces, from one side, the whole of human experience) is only to a very limited extent amenable to the methods of science. There is always, and, so far as we can tell, there always will be an irreducible  $x$  or unknown quantity. At least the theories of behaviorism, which represents a desperate attempt to get rid of the  $x$ , have not so far achieved conspicuous success, even in the judgment of so sympathetic a critic as Mr. H. G. Wells. Mr. Wells indeed regards this matter, as he does all others, from the scientific standpoint; but if we rise to the philosophic level, the claim of scientific method to be applicable to all that is real is at once seen to be illusory. It is sufficient to quote the words of Mr. F. H. Bradley: "There is nothing more real than what comes in religion. To compare facts such as these with what is given to us in outward existence would be to trifle with the subject. The man who demands a reality more solid than that of the religious consciousness seeks he does not know what."

This is not an attempt to maintain the pestilent doctrine of the "two truths," or to argue that a statement may be scientifically true and theologically false, or *vice versa*. It is simply an assertion that the categories of the scientific understanding break down if we try to apply them to the sum of things—that is, to turn science into metaphysics. At the scientific level it is true that a stone will continue to lie on the ground, in obedience to the law of gravitation, until some purely physical force counteracts that law. A boy picks up the stone and throws it into the sea; and it is still true that he has exerted just the amount of purely physical force that was necessary to throw it so far and no farther. But in addition to the physical force—as a purely unwanted extra from the scientific point of view—there is now added to the total phenomenon the boy's motive in his action, which theoretically no doubt is reducible to purely physical or chemical equivalents, but in fact can never be so reduced. From the ordinary human point of view the throwing is a mere matter of idle choice, for the theologian it is an insignificant exercise of free will. Of course no one believes that the



boy has "interfered with the course of nature," but still his action has introduced into the course of nature something that can never be expressed in scientific formulæ. We might put the whole thing symbolically by calling the physical result (the throwing of the stone)  $B$  and the physical force required for it  $A$ , and the boy's impulse  $x$ . Then  $A$  equals  $B$ ; but, unfortunately we are bound to add that  $Ax$  also equals  $B$ , which is absurd.  $X$  exerts no measurable influence on  $B$ , and yet without the presence of  $x$   $B$  would never take place. I confess it has always seemed to me that there is nothing illogical, unscientific, or unphilosophical in conceiving that the action of God on his universe—even in what we call miracle—might be strictly analogous to the  $x$  in our equation.

So much, then, for the purely theoretical objections to a belief in divine providence. It remains to deal with the far more pressing and poignant difficulties that arise from the experience of life. It is a strange and at the same time a consoling fact—for it shows at least that Christian people have never been blind to them—that these difficulties are nowhere described more urgently or in more impressive language than in the Bible itself, especially in the books of Job and Ecclesiastes. Thomas Hardy, in the passage in which he most fiercely arraigns the justice of events, makes the dying Jude voice the bitterness of his soul in the actual words of Job. The complaint of Ecclesiastes which pierces so directly to the heart of the matter—"All things come alike to all: there is one event alike to the righteous and to the wicked"—is the more effective because the writer is so obviously a detached and aristocratic Epicurean. He was not himself, we may safely conclude, one who had suffered from poverty and oppression; and this should serve to remind us of a logical principle which, in these hard times, men are often tempted to forget. The problem of unmerited suffering is, strictly speaking, the same for the millionaire as for the pauper. The former has as much reason—though, doubtless, far less cause—to doubt the providence of God, as the latter. In actual fact it is by no means those who are most hardly used by circumstance who are the readiest to curse God, and die. If we remember this constantly we shall be on our guard against the temptation to view the question through the haze of sentiment rather than in the clear light of reason and common sense. That haze, in modern times, generally takes on a very dingy hue. A great deal of "realistic" fiction, and of pessimistic philosophy and poetry, is inspired by sentiment which is none the less sickly and mawkish because it happens to be sour and disagreeable.

Most people will remember Brother Juniper in *The Bridge of San*



*Luis Rey*, and how he sought to prove that the five persons who were killed by the sudden breaking of the bridge died by the loving providence of God at exactly the right moment. According to the story Brother Juniper was burned as a heretic: and a dispassionate judgment can only confirm the decision of the ecclesiastical authorities as to his orthodoxy. It is truly remarkable how little Christ himself said in detail about the providential ordering of the world. He insisted always on the Fatherhood of God and taught his disciples that not a sparrow fell to the ground without the Will of God; but when confronted with the stories of the Galileans "whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices," and of "those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell," he made no attempt whatever to justify the ways of God to man. He said simply that these calamities were not a punishment for special and extraordinary sinfulness; and added with uncompromising sternness, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." It seems possible with tolerable certainty to draw a twofold conclusion from his attitude. First, he seems to warn us unequivocally that any attempt to trace a detailed plan in the ordering of *other people's* lives and deaths is doomed to failure. Secondly, he demands that in our own individual lives we should have an absolute confidence in God's loving and personal care; and yet that we should regard the calamities which befall others as warnings to ourselves, calling us to a continual renewal of our own spiritual life. In other words, he taught that the riddle of the divine ordering of human destiny can only be read by each of us *from the inside*, in the light of faith and personal experience.

The full and tremendous import of this teaching is worth serious consideration. To begin with, it definitely absolves the Christian from any obligation to do what Brother Juniper attempted in Thornton Wilder's famous story, namely, to account for the terrible inequalities and the seeming injustice of life as viewed from the outside. It implies that the problem is strictly personal to each individual soul, and that, therefore, if we can accept for ourselves only the belief in God's Fatherhood; if by any means we can believe that our lives up to the present have been divinely ordered; and can face the future, with all its terrible possibilities, in the strength of that belief, there is, in strict truth, no further problem at all. Nor can it be questioned that millions of persons, in every circumstance of agony and disaster, have held to that belief with unshaken and even joyful confidence.

I am anxious to emphasize that what is here in question is not merely or primarily a religious attitude, but a perfectly distinct philosophical posi-

tion and method. To expound and enforce that attitude is the function of the theologian, the religious teacher, and indeed of the whole church in her capacity as the mother of souls. The business of philosophy is quite other. After clearing the ground in some such way as I have attempted in the earlier part of this essay, it is for philosophy, without prejudice to religion or theology, to develop such a conception of the world order and of man's relation to it as will do justice to man's conviction that his moral and spiritual life is of real importance in the scheme of things, and that the Power which rules the universe is intimately concerned with his personal destiny. Presumptuous as the enterprise may seem, it is perfectly certain that religion, in any sense that matters, is possible on no lower terms. If we are not prepared to claim at least so much, we are guilty, to borrow Mr. Bradley's phrase, of trifling with what is after all a serious subject.

Solutions of the philosophical problem have, in the past, been worked out, with more or less success, along many different lines of thought. It is not possible here to do more than indicate a few leading considerations, which are at once strictly relevant, in the existing state of the question, and, at the same time, likely to meet with something like universal acceptance among those who have not already prejudged the issue in a sense hostile to religion. And, first of all, without taking sides in the controversy between idealism and any other metaphysical theory, we may confidently affirm that, if we are to have a tenable philosophy of theism, personality must be regarded as the highest category within our knowledge. In simple language, what most matters in the whole universe is the soul. It has been customary of late, in the philosophical defense of religion, to insist chiefly on the supremacy of value, and especially of the highest values, beauty, truth and goodness; and to argue that value is a surer guide than bare fact to the inmost nature of reality. This type of argument, as employed by thinkers like Dean Inge, is extremely powerful; but it is surely evident that any claim to reality which is asserted on behalf of value is *a fortiori* a claim for the soul. Value is a correlative term. If a thing is valuable, it implies a person for whom it has value, unless we are playing with words. Twenty-five years ago such a statement would have appeared self-evident to almost anyone contending for a religious theory of the universe: but since that time the concept of personality, of the self, has been so roughly handled, both by philosophical critics and by psychologists, that to-day we are shy of using it. We must make up our minds, however, that we cannot do without it: nor need we be too much abashed by our incapacity. Bradley, who wrote some of the most damaging criticism of the self, was

forced to the conclusion "that no element of reality falls outside the experience of finite centers," that is, of souls. This, no doubt, is sheer idealism: but, whatever our philosophy, we may accept the amended statement, that nothing that falls outside the possible experience of souls possesses any significance for us.

Plato is the Master of those who hold to the paramount reality of the soul; and any successful treatment of what Kant called the Ideas of Reason—the soul, the world and God—seems inevitably to follow the lines that he laid down. The relation of the soul to the world order involves those questions of freedom and necessity, with which we have already dealt, as it were, *in vacuo*. When we examine them with a more practical view, as they affect the moral and spiritual life, we are at once faced with the paradox so pointedly phrased by Plotinus: "Providence must not be such that we are nothing." The soul demands an assurance of rational order and of divine control in the universe, and, at the same time, of its own free agency and responsibility—a seemingly impossible combination of determinism and indeterminism. Moreover, that is what the moral and religious man, however imperfect his achievement, seems actually to find in his own experience. Plato seeks to give a theoretical satisfaction to this twofold demand, in his account of the soul's prenatal choice of its worldly life, in the myth of Er: and it has often been pointed out that this mythological explanation is exactly paralleled by Kant's doctrine that the will, though its actions are "phenomenally" determined, is "transcendentally" free. That great Platonist and Kantian, T. H. Green, has expanded this idea in a remarkable passage of a youthful essay on the "Force of Circumstances":

"The spiritual law of which we are conscious witnesses to us that we are properly free, but the antagonistic law which regulates the universe seems irresistibly dominant. At last we find that reconciliation is possible. The chain of cause and effect cannot be shuffled off, but it may bind us to Heaven instead of to earth; the force of circumstances cannot be evaded, but it may become a power of good instead of evil. To admit that a given combination of circumstances must produce a certain effect on a given state of mind is not to deny the mind's freedom, for the effect may be a resistance, not a submission to circumstances. . . . The solid walls of circumstance which shut in our energies stand firm as ever; but instead of chafing against them we see them reflecting the brightness of our deliverer's coming."

This passage may fairly be criticized as rhetorical rather than scientific, but its rhetoric expresses the truth of experience far more closely than any analysis of what is, in the last resort, unanalyzable. It may claim, at the same time, to be an accurate translation into theory of Christ's practical

injunctions for the spiritual life. The world order, as it embraces our individual lives, may legitimately be seen as a stern but inexorable system of government. To conceive of it as wholly inexorable is to falsify the whole character of our experience in the interests of a scientific postulate which is demonstrably applicable only to a somewhat narrow part. When we are inclined to fall into the heresy of Brother Juniper, and attempt a vindication of the justice of the world order in a particular series of outward events, whether on the largest or the smallest scale, we may learn an evangelical lesson from Plato's practice of resorting frankly to myth in dealing with problems which in their very nature transcend the ordinary "scientific" understanding. Any human attempt to see the sum of conditions as a whole is necessarily mythological, because, as Kant said, it involves a "transcendental" use of categories which are only applicable to phenomena. When, as in the theory of "dialectical materialism," such an attempt claims to be scientific, it is still sheer mythology masquerading as science, the relative setting itself up as the absolute. Yet there is a very real value in mythology which knows itself for what it is—an imaginative representation of truths, which are not the less true because they do not admit of statement in any but an imaginative form.

Plato's ideal theory, except in its purely logical aspect, plainly answers to this description; and so does Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and a great deal of Christian poetry besides, much of which has received the sanction of the church in the Canon of Scripture and in the literature of devotion and meditation. The representation of Christ under the figure of "a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" is a good instance, because the most literal-minded orthodoxy must recognize that it is wholly figurative, and yet it has seized so strongly on the Christian imagination that it has been universally adopted as a symbol of deep theological truths. Platonism dominates the history of religious philosophy, because for Plato nothing less stupendous than the relation of the soul to God and the universe was the central point both of religion and philosophy; and yet, for all his superb confidence in reason, he realized that that relation must be conceived under forms of the imagination, though of the imagination working creatively on matter supplied by reason and experience. The lesson of Platonism for our generation is that religion can never fulfill even its mission to society so long as its highest aspiration is to reform the social order or to "change lives." To achieve enduring social or moral improvement it must lay its foundations deep in the eternal. It must awaken the soul to its citizenship not in any earthly community, but in the city not made with hands.

# Experience of God as Personal

HERBERT H. FARMER

THE purpose of this paper is to treat of God as personal, not from the philosophical or theological angle, but from the angle of the practical religious life. It is based on two convictions: First, that belief in God as personal is central in the Christian creed. Second, that such belief, if it is to be not only central in the Christian creed, but also formative of the Christian life and character, must be more than a mere statement assented to by the mind; it must be realized with a vividness not incomparable to that with which we are aware of personality in one another. It must be a *living* as distinct from a merely *theoretical* belief.

## I

Let us first say something about this distinction between living and theoretical beliefs, and its relation to the subject under discussion.

By *theoretical* beliefs we mean beliefs to which we sincerely assent, but at the moment of assenting there seems to be very little more involved than the merely thinking part of us. By *living* beliefs we mean beliefs to which we assent, not only with the thinking part of us, but also with a more or less deep reverberation of feeling and a more or less definitely directed movement of will. That there is this broad distinction in our beliefs few will deny, although in actual experience the distinction is not always clear-cut. Much might be said, if this were the place to say it, about the relation of the two sorts of belief to one another and the way in which they flow in and out of one another. Sometimes the same belief falls more to the side of the theoretical at one moment, and more to the side of the living at another, according to our mood, or need, or immediate task. Thus the proposition "God is Holy" may command our wholehearted assent and yet hardly stir feeling and will at all; yet, at another time, it may stir feeling and conscience so deeply that we are brought to our knees in self-accusation, and sent out to make confession and restitution for some wrong done. Probably there are some beliefs to which many Christians, for various reasons, sincerely assent, but which are never brought out of the realm of the theoretical into the realm of the living; though, even then, that they gain assent at all is probably due to the fact that they are bound up in the believer's mind with some belief which is living. But however subtly the relations between the two types of belief might be



analyzed, the broad distinction remains clear enough in the everyday religious life. Probably the most vivid awareness of it comes in the difference which everybody knows only too well between the preacher who announces the great truths of Christian Faith in a dead, flat, merely theoretical way, and the preacher who announces them as though they really mattered both to himself and to his hearers. We know the difference through the difference in our own inner response. In the one case a merely theoretical assent is evoked, in the other feeling and will are also stirred.

It is, of course, a truism that what keeps Christianity alive as a vital and creative force in the midst of mankind is its living convictions, or rather it is the folk who have such convictions—the folk by whom the great Christian truths are not merely assented to as theological statements, but are vigorously affirmed and lived because they grip and engage feeling and volition as well. Most Christians realize, too, in a dim sort of way that not only must living convictions be present in at least *some* Christians, if Christianity is to remain a vital power in the world; they must also in some measure be present in *them* if their own Christian profession is to make any significant difference to their lives. A Christian life in which living convictions, as distinct from mere assents, or mere refusals to deny, of the mind, are not being built up is, we feel, no matter what amiable qualities it may possess, not only sterile and superficial, but also under perpetual threat of complete collapse. For it is the mark of a living conviction that it has an intrinsic vitality which enables it to attack, and even grow strong and more sure of itself through, what challenges it; whereas, a theoretical belief, so far from attacking, itself requires constant argumentative support and defense. To use a well-worn distinction, theoretical beliefs we have to carry, which is apt to be very wearisome, and merely an added burden when the going is hard. But a living belief, in spite of all falterings, somehow lifts and carries us.

This does not mean that for our religious life to be what it ought to be we must always be in an exalted mood of conviction, or be ready to rise into such a mood at any moment when some great Christian affirmation is mentioned or under discussion. That would wear everybody out. Such a notion makes for unreality of feeling, which is worse than having no feeling about these matters at all. The man who feels it incumbent upon him to display feeling at, or mix unction in, every mention of a fundamental Christian truth revolts us all. We instinctively feel that his convictions, so far from being really living, are such that he dare not for a single moment leave them to look after themselves. The mistake is to identify living



convictions with merely excitable and emotional ones, those which have, so to say, a hair-trigger action. The truth is, of course, that there are times and occasions when the more theoretical, reflective, critical attitude is appropriate and necessary. Moreover, it is a common enough experience of even the saints to fall into passing moods when the life seems to go out of what has hitherto been their most living convictions, and they are forced to carry on in the persuasion that these convictions, though now overclouded, are really the insights of their deeper and more trustworthy selves. Yet, of course, such a persuasion is only possible because there are convictions of a living and not merely theoretical sort to look back upon, it being the quality of a living conviction that it is so founded in the deeper life of the whole personality that its virtue abides even when, for one reason or another, its vitality seems low.

The reason why living convictions are thus essential in a vigorous and growing Christian experience and witness is not far to seek and brings us to the subject of this article. It is that Christianity is nothing if not the affirmation that the ultimate environment with which we have to deal is personal. It consists of persons in relation to one another—God himself, as the ultimate Reality from which the whole draws its being and character and destiny, being himself in some sense personal—and this no matter what philosophical difficulties the idea of personality as applied to God may raise. Now, it is the mark of a personal relationship that one cannot even begin to get inside it, still less get to know it for what it is and be rightly related to it, through a merely theoretical approach. There must be feeling and valuation and will, and something of that utterly distinct personal relationship of respect and trust. This is why it is so misleading to find an analogy, as some do, between the so-called faith of the scientist when he makes experimental ventures on the basis of more or less conjectural hypotheses, and the faith of the Christian in God. The two lie in entirely different fields. The former is purely theoretical, the latter must have something of feeling and will in it, must have trust in the personal sense in it, otherwise it is foredoomed to disappointment. You do not trust a person by making experiments with him to see whether he is trustworthy, for the necessity to make experiments shows that in the living and personal sense you do not as yet really trust him at all.

The gulf between theoretical and living convictions, indeed, nowhere appears more clearly than in personal dealings. Probably we have all experienced, sometimes with a shock, the difference between thinking about and passing judgment upon a person whom we have never met, and then

encountering and speaking with him face to face. Up to the moment of meeting he has been to us merely a "he," scarcely distinguishable, indeed, so far as our attitude is concerned, from an "it"; but now, as he looks into our eyes and we have to adjust ourselves to him as living will, he becomes, if we may use the phraseology with which recent German authors have made us familiar, a "thou," and instantly there come into play feelings and attitudes, which may sweep away altogether all our previous theoretical conclusions about him. We begin to have living convictions and insights about him, for the reason that we are now in immediate personal rapport with him and with a personal order through him.

## II

If all this be true, then it is clear that no more important question can be asked, from the standpoint of the Christian life, than how we may become livingly aware of God as personal. To ask such a question is to address ourselves to one of the most fundamental issues, perhaps *the* most fundamental issue, of the present-day religious situation. For the modern man, for reasons into which we do not here seek to enter, finds it extremely difficult to think of God as personal at all; and a great many Christians, soaked in the atmosphere of the age, share the disability, with the result that their Christian experience, if the thesis of this paper be sound, remains a weak and ineffective thing. Nor is the situation going to be met by merely arguing about the legitimacy of thinking of God as personal. We may dispose of all the intellectual difficulties and show that a theistic philosophy is an entirely respectable one and not in the least forbidden by the conclusions of science; we may produce a persuasive theodice and show that all the apparently impersonal disasters and compulsions of the world-order are not finally incompatible with the thought of a personal Father of our spirits; we may point to the witness of Christian experience all down the ages, beginning with Jesus himself, that God may be known and trusted in a personal way. Yet at the end of it all, we may have achieved very little, for the truth that God is personal, though accepted, may remain still merely theoretical, still merely a truth *about* God. The immediate, living, personal encounter with God, so that he is not merely said to be personal but is livingly dealt with as such, may still be far enough way. This is not to minimize the importance of reflexion in the religious life; it is only to point out once again the commonplace that by itself it can do very little, and to indicate the reason for it, namely, that in a strictly personal order general truths about God, though sincerely

believed, may leave you still without a truly personal and living relationship to it. It is one of our modern fallacies, obsessed as we are with the methods and deliverances of science, that the more we attain to general truths the nearer we come to ultimate reality. Whether this is in any sense so in any sphere of experience is perhaps open to question; but it is certainly not true in what to the Christian is the place where we quite certainly touch ultimate reality, and that is in the sphere of our personal dealings with God and with one another.

How then does a living conviction of God as personal come to a man's spirit?

We may begin with something which is more immediate and familiar, and to which reference has already been made, namely, our awareness of one another as personal beings.

Nothing is clearer to us in our ordinary, everyday life than the distinction between persons and things. The fact that in the animal world we have to deal with creatures which are neither one nor the other merely emphasizes the more the clarity and certainty of our awareness of personality when it confronts us. When I talk to my neighbor over the garden-hedge it is quite impossible for me, even for a moment or two, to react to him as I do to the dog, even though I may call him one to my wife afterwards. Nor am I in the least danger of confusing him suddenly with the radio which is talking, possibly far more intelligently, through the window. And the reason for this is not merely that external appearances and other coincident conditions make such a confusion impossible. There is also something peculiarly and intrinsically coercive and self-evident in the immediate relationship into which both have come through that conversation. A mechanical talking-doll made to look like him and by some inconceivable mechanism able to carry on an intelligent conversation for a minute or two would not deceive even for that minute or two. Something intangible, but very real, would be missing. As I talk to him, hear his views, say things which he repudiates, listen to things which I repudiate, sense feeling passing from one to the other—I just know, directly and indubitably, that I am in that quite distinctive relationship with that quite distinctive sort of being which I call personal. Some, indeed, have suggested that what happens is that I perceive with my senses the activities of my neighbor's body—his voice, his gestures, his whole physical behavior—and then merely infer, by a swift and habitual process of thought, that this must be someone with an inner personal life like my own. But that is surely not what happens. The perception of my neighbor as personal is much more

immediate and luminously certain than any conclusion to an inference, however swift and immediate, could ever be. Theoretically I should be bound to admit, if I paused for a moment and thought about it, that such an inference might be all wrong; my neighbor, after all, might, theoretically, be an elaborate mechanism or a hallucination. But when I am in practical rapport with him, I just know that such an idea is silly, if not meaningless. I am emphatically not here working with inferences, which might conceivably be mistaken. I *know* immediately that I am in a personal world, a personal dimension with him.

There is, to be sure, a certain paradoxical duality in the relationship. Owing to the fact that human personality is an indissoluble unity of mind and body, the awareness of my neighbor as personal seems to be at one and the same time a mediate and an immediate relationship. I could not have dealings with my neighbor were it not for the impressions that his physical being makes upon my senses; yet he is not hidden behind, and merely inferred from, the impressions he makes upon my senses. This, possibly, has some relevance to the question how we may become immediately aware of God as personal in and through the created order. An analogy might be found in the beauty of a melody. Physically the melody is merely a succession of notes and intervals, and that, presumably, is all it is to the dog. But to the musician the notes are not merely apprehended in this dimension of the physical; they are also apprehended as lying within the entirely different dimension of the beautiful. Nor can the one dimension be reached by inference from the other. The listener has suddenly to find himself as he listens to the notes in a dimension of the beautiful, a dimension which transcends the physical notes whilst depending on them, and has a certain intrinsic reality of its own. So it is with the perception of personality in one another.

Yet though there is this mediate immediacy in our perception of our fellows as personal, we can isolate and put our finger on what seems a quite central thing in it. This is our awareness of purpose, or will, coming forth from the other and meeting in a certain tension and resistance, our purpose and will. He values certain things and we value certain things, and the two sets of values clash and resist; or if they do not clash and resist, there is still felt to be a tension between them, for we have, and can have, no control whatever over his values and purposes. Now it is in this value-resistance, or tension, that our perception of the other man as personal becomes most vivid. In all departments of life we become most vividly aware of a reality other than ourselves at the point where it offers tension

or resistance. In physical things the resistance is to muscular pressure; in the realm of personality it is the resistance of values, of the other man's deliberately directed will and intention against ours. A man who is utterly subservient to another's purposes becomes a curiously flat, unreal, negligible sort of being. We say of him, "He has no personality; he is a nonentity." A person becomes an entity to us by having a purpose which meets ours and is beyond our control. Here, indeed, the difference between persons and things becomes most obvious. The pressure-resistance of things is overcome by manipulation; the value-resistance of persons we can only overcome by something we call agreement, reconciliation. If we attempt to overcome a value-resistance by manipulation, say by hypnotism, we speak of an abuse of personality and everybody knows what is meant even though it may be very hard to express it in words. In the light of this, let us return to the question of a living awareness of God as personal. If there is continuity between the personal world in which we live with our fellows and that in which we live with God—and Christianity, of course, emphatically affirms such a continuity—then this simple truth of great importance emerges, namely, that a central and indispensable thing in a living awareness of God as personal is something which happens, and must continue to happen again and again, in the sphere of our values, our wills. It will not be, we repeat, a matter of arguing, philosophically or otherwise, that the world *looks* as though it might have a personal purpose behind it, any more than my vivid perception of personality in my neighbor came by arguing that thus his physical antics might best be explained. It will be rather by becoming vividly and continuously aware of, and responding to, certain value-resistances, thrust down into the midst of our own values and preferences, of such a nature that we cannot but know them to come from the Eternal. The peculiar mark by which the religious mind recognizes certain value-resistances to come from the eternal is that they carry with them an accent of absolute unconditionality; that is, they call for obedience literally at any cost, even the cost of the complete surrender of life, whatever we may feel about it. We cannot here examine further this identification of an *absolute* value-resistance with the sense of the Will of God. We can only assume that so it is to the religious mind and stress the one thing that is germane to our purpose, namely, this truth: When once the Eternal is genuinely apprehended and sincerely faced in an unconditional value-resistance, the living awareness of it as Personal has begun, for, as we have seen, by value-resistance personal reality, the personal dimension, is known.



That the awareness of God is deeply related to the awareness of value and to the direction of the will is doubtless a truism of religious thought; but that is not what we have been seeking to express here. There is all the difference in the world between saying that through our sense of values we apprehend the Eternal and saying that in certain searching value-resistances God actively thrusts himself into the central places of our personality and speaks to us a summoning word; just as there is all the difference in the world between having a forceful neighbor come rapping at the door and vaguely intending at some convenient season yourself to call upon him. It is precisely this sense of activity in God that the modern man seems to have lost. And further, there is all the difference in the world between *saying* that God is Personal Purpose and thrusts these value-resistances into our being, and reacting to these value-resistances as though they are in very truth the impact of Personal Purpose upon us. It is here that even the best of us continually fail. God sets up a resistance in the sphere of our wills and its values and we are willing to *say* that it is God speaking to us; but in actual fact we treat the resistance again and again in an impersonal way, just as we might treat a physical hindrance, something to be got over or got round or otherwise adjusted to our purposes. Seldom do we look through the value-resistance into the eyes of an active God. To begin to do that is to begin to have a living sense of God as Personal.

### III

But it is only a beginning. Let us now make the matter far more concrete and practical by laying down a further principle. It is that there cannot be a living awareness of God as personal unless we realize that God meets our wills with his value-resistances always in the plane of our personal relations with one another. Unless a man is meeting God with the utmost seriousness in that plane, unless he is realizing that the one supreme achievement in life from God's point of view is to be in right relations to the men and women who cross his path, and this at any cost of resistance to his own natural feelings and impulses, he cannot meet him to much profit in any other plane of life, nor, certainly, grow into a living sense of him as personal. The solemn value-resistances of God concern themselves with our relations to our neighbors and with not any other thing. As to what constitutes right and wrong relations with our fellows it is not here to the point to discuss. It is enough that most men and women do as a matter of fact know when things are not what they ought to be in this sphere. The



point then is that when that happens they must realize that it is an unspeakably important thing, that they have reached a point of crisis in God's personal dealings with them. If they respond as they ought the door begins to open into a new personal world in which the sense of God as personal seeking personal ends is increasingly built up in the soul; if they do not the door is infallibly closed.

It is told of Aggrey, the African Negro Christian, descended from a line of proud chieftains, that once at breakfast he spoke hurtlingly to his wife in the presence of her sister. That night God met his proud spirit in a tremendous value-resistance. He must apologize and set the matter right. Very well, he would do it very quietly and privately. Then God resisted that. The apology must be in the presence of the sister for she too had been present and was involved, therefore, in the jangled personal relationship. All night God wrestled with Aggrey's imperious nature, and won. At breakfast the next day Aggrey apologized unconditionally to both women, who, knowing his nature, were almost in tears at such a total and humble giving away of self to them. Surely at that table all most livingly felt, as never before or elsewhere, the overshadowing reality of God—of God, not as a vague cosmic force, or as an inscrutable Being dwelling beyond the things of time and sense and to be worshiped in vague, adulatory phrases, but as Personal Purpose working recreatively and insistently with a personal world of personal relationships.

This is an example of a somewhat unusual strain and crisis in a man's spiritual history, and we should misunderstand the way in which the awareness of God as personal is built up into living conviction if we read the matter merely in terms of such crises as quarrels and estrangements. The distinctive thing about personal relations is that it is the one world in which we are all the time, in a way that we are not in the world of art, or science, or what is loosely known as "nature." It is challenging and fashioning us all the time. Hence if we are living in it with a mind continually made sensitive and responsive by the awareness that here is God's fundamental challenge to our souls, the living conviction of God as personal is being built up all the time in ways of which we are hardly aware and which it would be impossible to trace. It becomes a massive conviction which is proof against every skepticism and doubt, and which is not in the least dependent upon having any mystical experience of a Personal Presence to reinforce it. So many people seem to think that a living conviction of God as personal requires such a mystical experience. It is a complete mistake.

Once again, all this may seem in a measure platitudinous. Yet it is one thing to agree in general terms that God meets us primarily and usually resistantly, in the plane of personal relations, and another thing living to realize it and sincerely to respond to it, as Aggrey did, in the concrete and demanding situations of daily life. It is because so many fail to do this that God remains so desolatingly unreal to them, and if they continue to believe in him it is as a vague Cosmic Force rather than as a personal Being. So many people try to work up a feeling of the nearness and reality of God by some technique of devotion, or at some service of worship made impressive with beautiful music and solemn verbiage, or by going into the woods on a Spring day, and they fail dismally in the attempt, because all the time their personal relations are wrong or on a shockingly low or unredeemed level. It is refusing to meet God on the one plane where his reality as personal can ever be livingly made known to man and built up into the deepest assurances of his being. Especially in these days is much humbug talked about worshipping God "in God's open air," what Mr. Irving Babbitt calls "mixing oneself up with the landscape and calling it religion." Christ's words about leaving the gift on the altar and being first reconciled to your brother are not the less relevant because the altar happens to be a bird-bath and the temple a pergola. Few more unchristian things, indeed, have ever been said than that "we are nearer God's heart in a garden than anywhere else on earth." Infinitely nearer is the man who is seeking to knit together some tragic, and even sordid, estrangement of human hearts. Such an one is very close to the Cross, that Cross which rises right out of the heart of men's personal relationships with one another.

## "That Tremendous Dane"

ERIC H. THOMSEN

IN a review of Dr. Walter Lowrie's *Our Concern with the Theology of Crisis* Professor Wilhelm Pauck expressed the hope that the book "may stimulate some one to draw a picture of the profound Danish thinker," Soren Aaby Kierkegaard (1813-1855), "for the benefit of American Christians." In Europe the man who is regarded as the godfather, if not the parent, of the Barthian theology is well known, and the interest in him grows. But scarcely anything exists in the English language by or about "that tremendous Dane," as Doctor Lowrie fittingly calls him. Since I am able to read and appreciate Kierkegaard in his racy and partly altogether untranslatable Danish, it may not be considered presumptuous for me to try to provide the needed picture.

As in many good portraits, perhaps more than in most, we discover that Kierkegaard's picture shows distinct family resemblances. However, in this instance not the mother but the father was the influence which overshadowed all others.

The senior Kierkegaard died at the age of eighty-two, when Soren was barely twenty-five, leaving him enough of a competence to make him reasonably independent financially. But he left him another legacy far more sinister and pregnant with the weirdest possible consequences for the life and destiny of the son: the secret, long kept and dreaded, of how as a poor boy tending sheep on the Jutland moor and brooding on the moral character of a Providence which could bear to let a wretched stripling suffer so much cold and hunger and privation, he had finally risen on a hilltop to curse God! Space will not permit mention of the dreadful shock this was to the son, nor to trace the disastrous consequences of that childhood "sin" of the father on the entire family, except to say that when the first publisher of Kierkegaard's *Papers* showed an entry in his notebooks to his older brother, Peter Christian Kierkegaard, then Bishop of Aalborg, the latter burst into tears and exclaimed: "That is our father's history and ours as well!" The entry read: "How terrible, that the man who once as a small boy, tending sheep and, suffering much privation, famished and exhausted, rose on a hilltop to curse God, never managed to forget it though he lived to be eighty-two!"

Kierkegaard was not only handicapped by being the dilling in the family, *Skrabkagen*, the last cake made with the left over dough, as his

Jutish kinsfolk must have put it in their homely phraseology (his father was nearly fifty-seven when Soren was born), but also by the depressing atmosphere which his naturally gifted father had increasingly imposed on the home where no one but himself knew or suspected the dreadful secret of blasphemy which caused it, until, just before his death, he shared it with his brilliant son who, at twenty-five, had just come of age. Moreover, the elder Kierkegaard was odd about a great many things and kept his frail, sickly youngest son in cloistered seclusion, as far as possible, wearing odd garments which caused teasing guttersnipes to nickname him "the choir boy" and "Soren Sock."

Throughout his childhood and early youth Kierkegaard suffered from the consequences of his father's secret fear of divine retribution as well as from his morbid lingering on what he called "the sweet melancholy." One day the father stopped his son and said: "Poor child, you walk about in silent despair"; then added, after a while, the constant admonition, "See that you come to love Jesus rightly!" No wonder Soren should say in after years that in matters of religion his upbringing had been insane and sufficient to alienate any one from Christianity. But though this erratic home environment had the greatest possible influence on his life, he was delivered from the pangs which usually accompany poverty and social inferiority. His father had retired from business at forty to live on his money, and he spent his time studying the Bible and carrying on religious and philosophical discussions with his friends. The social standing of the family may be measured by the fact that Bishop Mynster was a frequent guest in the home and found the elder Kierkegaard quite a match.

After graduating from Borgerdydskolen (The School of Civic Virtue!) with high honors at the age of seventeen, Soren found himself a rich man's son, free to spend his time as he saw fit. He was brilliant, witty, socially popular and much sought after, yet with characteristic calculating keenness he observed that men gain glory and popularity in direct proportion to their dearth and distance; hence he stayed much by himself, only occasionally going out of town in his carriage or being seen in some expensive box in the Royal Theater, hearing an act or two of some opera, then back behind the drawn shades in his large house on Ny Torv, where all the rooms were lighted and provided with paper, ink, and quills, that he might pace to and fro, scratching down with feverish haste the thoughts and ideas which his restless, fertile brain conceived.

When he did go out, on the other hand, he became at once the life of any party, and people thought him, sitting there with his handsome fingers

trimmed with costly rings resting on his slender gold-capped cane, extraordinarily interesting and winsome. And he knew he was, for he was nothing if not a master at creating an effect by which, for a few minutes, he might soothe, by irresistible paradoxes, the dark despair which raged within.

His father, still at bottom the Jutland peasant who looked in awe upon the priest as secular and spiritual authority, though now highly versed in matters of philosophy and religion, had urged upon Soren graduate study of theology. That was still in those days a respectable study, leading to positions of distinction and remuneration, but Soren Kierkegaard took no particular interest in theology. He was greatly intrigued, however, by his two philosophy professors and easily passed his so called "second examination," after which he spent the following years in esthetic philandering until the cry for meaning and purpose in life rose within him.

When he was twenty-two the question came to him, "What does God intend with me?" and he noted that the answer depended on his ability to find "a truth which is truth for me, to find the idea for which I shall be willing to live or die." But his immediate decision was to "live and act," though his action was confined to greater participation in student activities (mostly revels), with the result that one night with some other students he visited a brothel, Kierkegaard being intoxicated, and was plagued ever after not only with the thought of the loss of purity but with the possibility of having become responsible for starting another life. Nevertheless he continued to carry on, got himself into debt, got himself into argument with his father, who tried to keep him pretty close, moved away from home, and had to supplement his allowance by tutoring Latin in his former school. Latin and Danish were the only subjects, by the way, in which he ever excelled, and neither teachers nor fellow students suspected him of being in the least brilliant or extraordinarily gifted. At that time Hans Christian Andersen published a novel in which he claimed that genius requires care and nursing if it is to unfold. Kierkegaard reviewed the book and took the very opposite view: "Genius is like a thunderstorm: it goes against the wind," thus reflecting already at this early stage his eagerness for battle and his utter conviction of his own superior powers.

Soon after, when Kierkegaard reached his twenty-fifth birthday, his father made a financial settlement with him and, moreover, shared with him his dreadful secret of the childhood "sin," and then passed away leaving Soren dazed and bewildered. In his notebook he made an entry at this time which referred to "the great earthquake . . . the frightful revolu-

tion that compelled a new, infallible means of interpreting the various phenomena."

*Ufejlbartig Fortolkningslov!* Kierkegaard called it—an infallible law of interpretation. Modern alienists would call it rationalization. But the man's greatness is not substantially affected by whether or not, and to what extent, there was an element of insanity in him; there doubtless was; it seems the price he paid for being what he was. The communication of the father he proceeded to use as a key to his own and his family's destiny, and henceforth saw everything in the light of condemnation and punishment. They could not have been given prosperity, honor, prominence, and brilliant mental powers because God especially favored them, for the family head had placed himself, by his dreadful deed, beyond fellowship with God. Rather (so it seemed to Soren in his darkest moods) they had achieved worldly success by bargaining with the devil, or (in lighter moods) they had fallen heirs to all this so that the punishment, when it did fall, might feel all the heavier.

Because he had promised his father to graduate in theology, Kierkegaard felt in honor bound to continue his studies though not without embarrassment at having to toil at lessons and submit to examinations, being now an older academician known already as a brilliant *littérateur* with a bent for philosophy. But with the aid of a tutor he succeeded in taking a First in theology within two years. He was then twenty-seven and still unmarried.

From his subsequent journey to Jutland, whence both his parents and all their kin hailed, he returned strengthened and cheered, and determined to become engaged to the girl who was to become his destiny in more ways than one. Before she had become confirmed he had met Regine Olsen, the daughter of a government official, and each had strongly attracted the other. Never doubting that he could "win any girl" he wanted, when he thought he had found the right girl, he wooed her with cunning daring. His courtship was audacious, spirited, calculating, and brief. He introduced himself in her home and was quickly accepted by the girl, taking her almost by storm, though she felt under previous obligation to the man she subsequently married.

As long as the buoyancy necessary for conquest co-ordinated all Kierkegaard's powers, he seemed triumphant, wholesome, joyous; but having conquered he became once more apathetic and morbid. Kierkegaard himself attributed the entire failure of the engagement to his insidious morbidity



which could not fail to make Regine's married life miserable; hence he must cancel the engagement.

That this morbidity was a matter of heredity in his family was plausible, in view of what happened to the father and his two sons. In the case of Soren Kierkegaard the morbidity was not lessened by the disease of the spinal cord which was supposed to have contributed to his early death and which may be traced back to an accident during childhood. Kierkegaard often mentions his "thorn in the flesh." Let us assume that it concerned chiefly this morbid disposition which Kierkegaard himself stressed—that and something more which alike defied explanation and comprehension in the agony of soul which it produced. The crisis could not but result in heart-rending inner strife which expressed itself in conflicting forms. Was God testing him to see if he had enough courage and faith to hold on to what was manifestly God's gift to him, or was it the will of God that he should let Regine go? In the end he let her go, though he wrote later in the former mood: "Had I had faith, I should have remained with her."

When the final break came (for of her own accord she would not give him up), enough time had lapsed for the town gossips to feast on the case. His motives were not understood; he was accused of "experimenting" with an innocent young girl, and he was quite generally condemned. He stood all he could of it for a fortnight and then fled to Berlin. But when it was all over he confessed to feeling a considerable measure of freedom, and unsuspected new resources welled up within him and drove him to writing what was to become thinly veiled autobiography. He now referred to the recent crisis as the "factor that made him a poet."

But there were at least three important factors in his life. Mention has already been made of two—his father and his engagement. It seemed as if his writing must constantly be continued by the pressure of some outside event. When something happened to tear his soul he could write as few have ever written. There are constant traces in his writings to show how closely his own experiences determined his career. He says in his diary, for example: "When father died, Sibbern told me, 'Now I don't suppose you will ever graduate in theology,' but that is precisely what I did do. Had father lived, I should never have graduated. When I cancelled my engagement, Peter told me: 'Now you are lost.' And yet it is evident that to the extent that I amount to anything, I have come to do so by this very step."

There was no doubt about Kierkegaard amounting to something, but his path was arduous and painful. His next step was to carry him into the

field of religion in general and the Christian religion in particular. During the next few years after breaking his engagement he gained vast prominence as a writer. He maintained that from the very beginning he had aimed at religion, and only, as a part of his plan, used the conceptions of life set forth in his secular works as a necessary background for the moral and religious issues which seemed to him supreme, as exemplified in the contrast between the esthetic First Part of his *Either—Or* and the ethico-religious Second Part. The first part of his literary work was concerned chiefly with the introduction of various types of life (*Stages on Life's Path*) by way of stressing the nobler forms and warning against getting lost among the lower forms. His attitude toward religion at that time was a mildly Christian humanitarianism, chiefly set forth in his eighteen "edifying talks," published during this period to counterbalance his esthetic writings, and published under various pseudonyms. The end of the first period was marked by the publication, in 1845, of his *Final Unscientific Postscript*, final (*afsluttende—conclusive*) in the sense that he would now show the world that he was not merely a piquant littérateur but a Christian, and he would prove it by retiring to a country parish (according to his later way of thinking this was not exactly the way to prove one's Christianity). But again some casual circumstance occurred to prevent him from carrying out his plans.

The occasion was a lengthy attack in the *Corsair*, a comic on the order of *Punch*, in sharp opposition to the absolute monarchy of the day, jeering at all constituted authorities in particular and flippant about everybody else in general. That Kierkegaard had gone scot-free so far was only because Goldschmidt, the publisher, admired his wit and style (he had only recently commented editorially on the *Stages* in these flattering words: "Lehmann—that is, Orla Lehmann, the statesman, whose name was on everybody's lips—will die and be forgotten, but Victor Eremita (one of Kierkegaard's pseudonyms) will never die." The controversy did not actually start in the *Corsair*, but was caused by a review elsewhere by one of its associate editors who had referred to Kierkegaard in such terms as "brilliant glimpses of genius" . . . "bordering on the insane," and had brought up again all the old gossip about his "experimentation" with a young girl. Kierkegaard let one of his pseudonyms, Frater Taciturnus, give a sharp reply through the columns of a conservative daily, branding the whole thing as one of those "Loathsome *Corsair* assaults" and demanding to be scolded rather than praised in its pages lest he should suffer the indignity ("hard on a poor author") of being pointed out as the only author in Danish literature who had not been abused by it.

Kierkegaard had his wish (if indeed his wish went that far), but he had not counted on the resources of unscrupulous journalism which has no consideration for anybody. The results, in terms of personal abuse (since his well known philosophy of life which had so recently been editorially praised to the sky could not now be consistently exploited), went beyond anything Kierkegaard or any one else could possibly have expected. Goldschmidt rightly suspected that Kierkegaard was most vulnerable at the point of his person and personal idiosyncracies, so a whole series of issues proceeded to caricature him unmercifully: here he was, spindle-legged, with uneven trouser legs, that ridiculously broad-brimmed stovepipe hat, the umbrella under his arm, and as if that were not already too much, he was pictured riding on the back of a girl: "Frater Taciturnus, breaking in his girl!"

It was a devastating attack, and Kierkegaard never quite recovered from it. His sensitive nervous system and solitary youth had rendered him entirely unfit to meet such an attack. He frothed and raged with pain and accused his native city of being as provincial as a rookery (not entirely untrue), where only mediocrity would be admired and promoted while real quality would not even be considered, and he ended by defining his own position as that of being "a genius in a small town." Indirectly, of course, the entire case came before the public in his subsequent writings, for now he certainly was not going to retire to any country parsonage: people should not think him a quitter! On the contrary, he would stay and fight it out, and complete the task which gradually had become to him his particular mission—namely, to interpret Christianity.

Kierkegaard's tendency to rationalization has already been pointed out. But in addition to "interpreting" he now tended to exaggerate his impressions and experiences until the controversy with the *Corsair*, an incident which many would have ignored, caused him to see the monster as Anti-christ. He had attacked the monster, if not immediately killing it (though Goldschmidt resigned shortly after), and to Kierkegaard the deed began to look like one of the major events in the world's history: it became a "true deed of Christian love," rewarded as deeds of love are rewarded in this world. During the crisis of his engagement he had come to see himself as Abraham, the "father of faith," making an offering to God of his beloved; now he compared himself with the greatest figures in history, finally with the Christ, and henceforth his interpretation of the figure of the Christ colored most of his writing. Space does not permit me to show how gradually he came to draw parallels between his own anguish and the passion of

Christ, or why he suddenly became so concerned with the solitary "individual." His growing interest in the inner life caused him to place all of his emphasis increasingly on sincerity (*Inderlighed*) and suffering (*Lidelsen*). He became eloquently critical of the externalism of the age and pleaded "anxiety towards sincerity" (*Uro i Retning af Inderlighed*). There can be no question of inward direction, however, until the whole man is personally aroused. Hence he used the personal pronoun "thou": "Thou art the man. Thou art very personally concerned." Remember, all this is a question of your own soul, its destiny, your responsibility for it. When he looked at the world, it seemed as if the individual entirely disappeared in ceaseless external activity. "Subjectivity is the truth." This famous sentence must be understood, of course, as pertaining to fundamental values of life and religion. It is better, according to Kierkegaard, to pray to an idol in faith and passionate sincerity (*Inderlighed*), than to the one true God without them; for religiously speaking it does not matter greatly whether or not your premises are correct. Hence speculations and learning do not matter at all, as sincerity alone is the path to religion. To be sure, in Christianity the path leads through irreconcilable opposites which must nevertheless be reconciled, a task fraught with anguish and suffering, and that, within Christianity, is the highest expression of sincerity.

But that in life which Kierkegaard termed "sincerity" he also expressed in terms of existence. To relate oneself "existentially" to anything means to be absorbed by it, the state of being wholly at one with it and not merely to think about it; for obviously there is a vast gulf between being wholly at one with something and merely superficially preoccupied with the same thing. In matters of religion, for example, to contribute something esthetic or artistic, like writing a hymn or preaching a sermon, is far different (and less) than to live under the constant tension of sincerity and suffering, taking the risks of faith. He characterized his own relation to Christianity as that of "poetical existence." It is characteristic of Kierkegaard's religious views that when his own country was at war he completely ignored the fact until his valet was conscripted. During Easter of 1848 (at the beginning of the war which lasted nearly three years) the champion of sincerity wavered between hope and fear. In May he made this entry: "Now since Easter a hope has awakened in my soul that God will lift the complete misery of my being." But he soon concluded that he would not be delivered from his "thorn in the flesh," though he took comfort in the assurance that God in his mercy would help him carry his load.

During this third stage of his career he became acquainted with the

vague and confused writings of a Pastor Adler (subsequently retired because of insanity). Kierkegaard was well aware of Adler's faulty reasoning, but sensitive to "the lyrical seething in his style"—characteristic of Kierkegaard's own—and much of that "beyond the ordinary" which comes "like the flight of wild birds over the heads of tame ones" to place the austerity of Christianity in bold relief; though Adler himself was like "one whirled away, cast aside like a terrible warning. Instead of being able to help the rest of us, he is like the scared, confused bird which on the wings of terror precedes the storm." Kierkegaard himself was the storm. It broke when he began to assert that Christianity no longer had any existence. As a matter of history, he proclaimed, people had begun to compromise its severe demands back in the middle ages when they came to look upon those who took their Christianity seriously as out of the ordinary, that is, as saints: "Then the meaning of Christianity died!" Luther, of course, he held, went even farther by stressing the mediating function of the Christ, forgetting that he was also the example, thereby encouraging that levelling and plebian movement called Protestantism, which makes ordinary people the equals of apostles and witnesses to the truth. As a matter of fact, the apostasy can be traced back even to the founding of the church, for when the apostles converted 3,000 people to Christianity in one day they had forgotten what it meant to be a Christian. Even the very prototype (he continued in merciless logic) had been guilty of human weakness, for by attending the wedding in Cana he succumbed to worldly pleasures. But no matter how it happened, Christianity had become "sentimental nonsense" (*kaelent Vrovl*) about the satisfaction of one's deepest longings and all that sort of thing, and the awesome, austere, righteous God has taken on the form of a benevolent, inoffensive old grandpa. Symbolic of all the pleasant worldliness of modern religion was its Christmas celebration. Christianity has simply become a "Christmas commotion." In the end, woman is blamed for this scandalous deflection from the ideal.

The figure of the Christ constantly occupies the foreground in Kierkegaard's Christianity, but not the mighty Christ, seated in glory on the right hand of the Father. No, Kierkegaard's Christ is "the humble man, born of a spurned maiden, his father a carpenter, related to other lowly people," a man who associated with vagabonds and vagrants, a man out of touch with scholarship and philosophy, despised, blasphemed against (*bespottet*), and spat upon (*bespyttet*). There are evident parallels between Jesus being held up to sport and contempt, as Kierkegaard draws him, and the experience of Kierkegaard himself. As formerly he had seen himself in the part



of Abraham, so now he adapts the picture of the Christ to his own likeness.

Yet Christ was the supreme paradox, for what could be more paradoxical than that God, the Eternal, in the midst of time, in the course of history, should take upon himself the life of a man, one of the most despised of men to boot! Here thought meets its greatest problem, faces its greatest cross. To lighten it (the cross), to solve the paradox, to prove (or even render plausible) that the Christ could be identical with these irreconcilable opposites, would be the most unfortunate of all shortcuts, for the central fact of all faith (which is the way unto salvation) is belief in the unreasonable, the impossible, the paradoxical. No: one must face the paradox by following the Christ—that is, by becoming *contemporaneous* with him, one of Kierkegaard's key words. One may easily pretend to believe in him at a distance and profess adoration of his mighty deeds, but "in contemporary situations they become desperately inconvenient and almost compel convictions." What would anyone now living think of the Christ as he then appeared? Any self-respecting citizen would warn his son against him because he had no visible means of support; the scholar would hold him in contempt because he was untutored; the clergy would look upon him with suspicion because he never called a convention and put no program to a vote. And thou! What wouldst *thou* say of a man who claimed to be God's son but appeared "between a bricklayer and a brushmaker's apprentice with a flock of herring fishermen trailing behind"? Even at the cost of unspeakable anguish it is barely possible that more than you would shrink from all your suffering you would dread being cast out from all conventional associations with other people to be mocked and jeered, day by day, for following the Christ. Please do not say that it has become impossible, in our day and generation, for any one to suffer because of his religious faith; all you need to do, says Kierkegaard, is to "confess the Christ as he appeared to his contemporaries," then Christendom will see to it that you are duly persecuted.

But if being a Christian is as agonizing as that, why should any one want to become a Christian? The answer is that no one does particularly want to, but is driven to it by despair, by consciousness of sin. Then, "What does the church think of the Christlike ideal?" Kierkegaard suggested either one of two positions: one might regret the deflection from the ideal (but keep quiet about it) and claim that one lived according to the pure ideal, all the time living by something different (and far less), which was precisely, he said, what the established church was doing. Or one might recognize the ideal in all its majesty and with passionate sincerity endeavor



to practice it by serving as a "*witness for the truth*" (*Sandhedsvidne*—another of his great words). But Kierkegaard, as a matter of record, himself took a third position: One must recognize the ideal in all its majesty and *one's own shocking distance* from it, and then *humble oneself* beneath it. That does not necessarily mean that one must turn witness for the truth; having humbled oneself before God beneath the ideal, one may otherwise "mind one's business, deriving from it whatever happiness one can."

If the church had left the matter there, Kierkegaard (whose writings formerly had always needed some external propulsion) might have stalled and died comparatively peacefully. He did not care to go bishop-baiting while old Bishop Mynster, the hero of his youth, though now a somewhat soiled image, was yet alive, but when Mynster died, and Professor Martensen (popularly designated his successor), eulogizing Mynster, called him a "witness to the truth, a link in the chain of saintly character that stretches from apostolic days down to the present," it was more than Kierkegaard could bear in silence. To be a "witness to the truth" had become for him the concentrated expression for everything he meant by *following the Christ*; and Martensen had no sooner comfortably taken possession of the bishop's chair than Kierkegaard exploded with an article in one of the dailies: "Was Bishop Mynster a witness to the truth?" And then followed one of the weirdest paper-wars ever fought, with protests from sources clerical and lay. Kierkegaard to begin with had pleaded only for recognition of the contrast between ideal and practice. "But if Mynster is to be canonized from the pulpit, a protest is in order," and then he painted in bold, vivid strokes a picture of the witness to the truth who, after a life of every conceivable misery, is "at length crucified or decapitated or broiled alive, his exanimate body casually dropped somewhere by the hangman, without burial." Mynster a witness to the truth! No, official Christianity is no longer Christian! New Testament Christianity has ceased to be; as a matter of fact it scarcely ever entered the world, but died with the prototype and, perhaps, a very few of his apostles. Did Kierkegaard himself live New Testament Christianity? No, he is only a poet who knows, perhaps, better than others, how to describe the ideal.

Kierkegaard now cut loose from the press and started his own magazine, *Ojeblikket* (*The Moment*, one of the indications of his sense of urgency, of crisis, which the theology of Barth has not been slow to exploit). Altogether nine issues appeared. His language increased in vehemence; he had dropped his former difficult academic terminology and henceforth displayed all his brilliant style: keen, glowingly alive, aggressive, alike

marked by sincerity and simplicity; pathos mingled with withering scorn, sparkling wit with freezing contempt. Not only did his language grow in violence, but the content became more personal. These "silk, velvet and bombazine priests" he held up as so many perjurers and man-eaters who had broken their promises and lived by consuming the Christ and his blood-witnesses. He scourged these 1,000 "meal-hounds" (*Levebrodre*) and their 1,000 "meal-tickets" (*Levebrod*—livings). "To be sure, I know that persons who never otherwise agree with me in anything would urge that there must be exceptions. No thank you, to start that would be to end up by being a party to the whole shindy. . . . Literally speaking there is not a single honest priest." Perhaps this somewhat sweeping statement will best be understood against the background of a slightly earlier one to somewhat the same effect: "I personally know several highly respectable, able, even exceptionally able clergymen: but I venture to charge that there is not a single one in the whole kingdom who, in the light of the 'witness to the truth,' would not look comical."

The price must be high if the path is to lead upward. There was one way around, and one only: "Be a milksop and you will see all your difficulties dissolve."

Those were his last words. He was getting on toward the end; his work was done; death came as a natural finish; his money was spent; he had drawn his last balance; he fell over in the street, ill, and was carried to the hospital. An old hospital journal opens with these words: "Dr. Soren Kierkegaard, age 42, admitted 2/X, 1855; died 11/XI '55, 9 p. m." He left barely enough to cover the cost of his burial.

When they took him to the hospital he said, "I am come to die." When Emil Boesen, a friend since his youth, now a pastor in Horsens, asked if he had anything to say, he first answered, "No," then added, "Yes, greet all men; I have been fond of them all; and tell them my life has been one constant agony, unknown and incomprehensible to others; everything may have looked like pride and vanity, but it was not. I am no better than others; I never said I was and never said anything else. I had my thorn in the flesh; hence I never married, nor could I accept a living. Though as a graduate in theology, of public access and private favor, I could have had anything I wanted; instead I became the exception. When it was still day, I submerged myself in work and tension, and when evening came, I was laid out of the way, that was the exception."

He died without partaking of the Lord's Supper because he would not receive it at the hands of a clergyman.

Whoever has read thus far must have become aware that one can not briefly do justice to a genius so manysided and so full of contradictory impulses as that of Kierkegaard. My friend and former teacher, Dr. Kort K. Kortsen, now Professor of Philosophy and Rector of the University of Jutland, to whom I am indebted for my earliest interest in Kierkegaard and for supplying me with most of my material, has succeeded better than any other I know in interpreting his great fellow Jute.

Kierkegaard considered himself a genius, and so he was. But, says a witty Frenchman paradoxically, "genius is a neurosis." Allowing for the paradox, it does not necessarily follow that every genius must be neurotic any more than that to be neurotic is to be a genius. Rather may the explanation be this: often the rarest, most exalted quality rests on an exceptionally fine and sensitive nervous system which is far more susceptible, of course, than a coarser one to injuries received in the rough and tumble contacts with life. Genius may, therefore, very well be related to disorders of the nerve and brain cells, though it need not be. But in Kierkegaard's case the two were undoubtedly present. Already from birth he was a markedly weak and sickly child. "I was frail and weak and almost in every respect denied the chance to become a whole being, in comparison with others, depressed, soul-sick, in many ways deeply and completely lost" (*forulyk- ket*). His home and upbringing did not tend to improve this. There were also brighter traits in his character, probably chiefly inherited from his mother and undoubtedly encouraged by her and his sisters; but his father's character and influence became dominating factors in fixing Kierkegaard's personality and in shaping the course of his life.

As a consequence of Kierkegaard's sensitive, sickly nervous system he felt too strongly about everything he experienced. He brooded over painful impressions incessantly and with permanent effect. Because of these peculiarities he would not only exaggerate but completely misinterpret things and events and end up by becoming dreadfully morose; but in the selfsame soil were also rooted some of the noblest traits in his character, such as his sensitive appreciation of other people and other ways of life, his rich sympathy, the very qualities which made him a poet and a psychologist.

It was the strength of his imagination which determined his relation to reality. It was this abounding strength and rich coloring which marked his literary output; but by the same token he found it difficult to lay hold on reality. Even when the religious outcry sounded loudest within him, he did not venture farther than to describe himself as "a poetic existence"

in matters of religion. He may have felt restrained by humility, but was probably also aware that he faced here one of his fundamental weaknesses, which accords well with his self-accusation that, in his youth, he had looked without sympathy on life and people as on a drama which did not concern him. And it was his very difficulty in grasping reality which, because he always chose the hardest of two alternatives, caused him in matters of ethics and religion to lay so much weight on choice, decision, and the "existential."

Kierkegaard's impulsive and restless imagination was one of the causes of the conflicting elements in his character. He was constantly occupied with himself, his person, his circumstances, and deeply preoccupied with his own inner life. But though he was a ponderous Hamlet—and he was mostly that—he was also a good deal of a Don Quixote, fighting "systems" and other windmills, and capable of displaying a good deal of resolution.

His deepest trait was religious, partly as a matter of inheritance, partly developed by upbringing and the influence of his childhood environment. But his imagination was familiar also with other (and entirely different) activities of the spirit; he was inclined to worldliness and pleasure seeking, probably stimulated by the cloistered life of his early youth.

By mental temper he was very much an aristocrat, deeply conscious of his own superiority and entirely without respect for the particular wisdom of learned professors. Yet he bowed to other authorities, such as those constituted to govern state and church (part of the influence of his upbringing). He deeply despised the contemporary movement toward popular liberty and democracy, though in his personal associations he showed marked appreciation of and interest in common people, and for the "distinguished bourgeoisie" he had nothing but contempt.

Though he is probably one of the greatest figures in Danish literature, he is scarcely more widely appreciated in our century than he was in his own, although Doctor Lowrie in his recent brilliant interpretation of Kierkegaard in his relation to the Theology of Crisis sees him becoming "the dominant intellectual factor" of our day. This lack of popular appreciation is not to be wondered at when one recalls the frightful disharmony of his personality and the total lack of popular appeal in his writings. But few things could be more thought-provoking to the present generation of potential witnesses to the truth than a penetrating study of the life and works of "this tremendous Dane."

# Dear Babylon

DOUGLAS HORTON

LONDON has its ages, prehistoric, ancient, medieval, modern. Berlin and even New York have their centuries. But Chicago, the fourth city of the world, has only its decades.<sup>1</sup> For that very reason, however, it is easier to study Chicago; and because Chicago is typical of the modern metropolis everywhere, it is easier from it to discover out of what strands the tangled skein of the growing life of all our later cities has been woven and to determine the one thing needful for their future.

On the day, Wednesday, August 17, 1803, when Lieutenant Swearingen made the famous entry in his diary—"Proceeded on our march at 6 o'clock A. M., 34 miles and encamped on the Chicago River, at 2 o'clock P. M."—he found four huts there, belonging to the traders Le Mai, Ouillette, Pettie, and (apparently) Kinzie. The post was already considered part of the missionary diocese of St. Louis and had been visited by Father Badin in 1796, who returned in 1822 to perform the first baptism recorded in Chicago. At the establishment of the community three powers are thus in evidence: the power of ordered society represented in the lieutenant and his troops, the power of individual initiative, in the traders, and the power of religion, in the church.

Return even to the shadowy figures of the seventeenth-century period of discovery: the same powers are there. La Salle, indefatigable, dreaming of greatness for the name of France, looks back over the portage from the Lake to the Illinois River with the same surmise that fired the minds of Charlemagne and Napoleon. Pere Marquette in the winter of '74 lies quiet in his *cabanne* preaching as he can to his friends the Indians and sustained in his last illness by "the Blessed Virgin Immaculate."<sup>2</sup> But even before the coming of Marquette, with his pathfinder Joliet, and doubtless even before La Salle left his St. Lawrence estate at Lachine, there are traders exchanging beads for furs at the spot where the trappers of the Mississippi valley could most conveniently meet the *coureurs de bois* who supplied the merchants of Quebec and Paris. The power which is government is there; the power which is personal energy is there; and the power which is religion is there.

And these are the three powers which have made our modern cities.

<sup>1</sup> *The Chicago Primer*. By Victor E. Marriott. Chicago Congregational Union, 1932.

<sup>2</sup> *Chicago and the Old Northwest*. By Milo M. Quaife. University of Chicago Press, 1913. Chap. II.

By government I do not mean merely government founded upon substantive law, but all the authority that society has over its individuals, the total social control of our behavior. Professor Merriam, in his chapter on the invisible government of Chicago, lists under that heading political parties and factions, civic societies, business, labor, racial groups, religious groups, professional groups, women's groups, the press, and the underworld.<sup>3</sup> These contribute in varying degrees to the formation of the mental pattern of the citizens of an American city. It is not only, however, organizations conscious of themselves that affect the lives of people. The undesignated groupings with their inarticulated moralities are as solicitous nurses as our children and we ever have. And because all these social forces govern us, *impressing* us as they *express* themselves, they, together with the visible authorities, are government.

With this definition it is necessary to see that there is no such thing as good government as such. Government alone, however puissant and well ordered it may be, cannot create the good life. Therefore, it is not in itself good.

Consider the work of government when it functions according to the best bourgeois pattern. Who does not know that family, the father of which came to the city a horny-handed son of the farm and, as we say, "made good"? But look at the son today: a male debutante! a wholly admirable good fellow for a conversation and for friendship of a sort, a pleasant partner at a dance—not so successful a partner for marriage. This good fellow is really a social robot with something wanting in his make-up which separates him from the breed of creative personalities and makes his youth but the feeble echo of his father's. Anybody can tell in advance how he will dress, how he will vote, and how he will think—if the glow of a prejudice can be called thinking. There is more than one father who has had to ask himself if polished mediocrity is the end of city life. There is nothing in the expansion and strengthening of the power of society over its individuals which is in itself good. When left to do its work unhindered it is likely even to crush out entirely the qualities which make for individuality.

But even more clearly can this be seen when government functions in the degenerate manner. An old woman came into my office. Her bent back told its tale of unending labor, and the lines of sadness on her face were indelible and deep. There are, of course, a million like her. I ran through my list of questions. *Where do you come from?* She named a

<sup>3</sup> *Chicago*. By Charles E. Merriam. Macmillan, 1929.



county in a Southern state, whence she had been brought as a child. In my fancy's eye I saw her, a little ringlet-haired thing in the arms of her mother as they appeared at the door of a friend's house to spend their first night in the city of their hope. *How old are you?* She knew she was over sixty, though not exactly by how much. I saw the operation of that law whereby, when experience becomes too bitter to be borne, consciousness dulls off into callousness and we forget. *Any living relatives?* She had had some brothers and sisters, but had been without word of them for half a lifetime. I saw the little family growing up on the poverty wages won by the burdened mother and a ne'er-do-weel father. *Married?* That was a long story, for she had been married not once, but many times: but now for some time she had been alone. I saw her as a young girl, clothed with such attractions of feature and dress as she had been able to wrest from the slum, appearing with her man at the rectory to be married; then the beginning of her long battle, lost before it was started, to keep love alive and the home intact in face of penury and alcohol and the steely hardness of her environment; then the leaving that husband; and after a little, because she was desperate in her loneliness, finding another, with fewer burning hopes to be extinguished this time, but with disillusionment as certain as death, none the less; and so on, moving often, as evictions threatened; all the once virtues of her character ebbing away in the wake of self-respect, until now there was nothing left but the animal residuum of hunger and the instinct of self-preservation. *Have you any children?* She had had children. She had seen four of them die. She thought three were still alive but God knew where they were. The crowning tragedy in the existence of the poor, is it not just this: that the fight for a livelihood, which drags them from city to city, leaves them little energy or ability to maintain even the simplest ties of family relationship? One could see the back rooms in which the children grew up, the first welcomed and much loved, the second less loved, following so close that the mother's arms were hardly rested from the first; then the third, unless the merciful agony of a mis-carriage should have intervened; and for those who lived, a childhood on filthy streets; the meretricious ideals that children acquire who are suckled on the American screen and the yellow press; the pitiable non-resistance to the sinister forces that presently swept in, caught their youth, dissolved their morale, and made them, like their mother, anonymous flotsam on the social tides of the Great City.

There is nothing good in the expanding control of society over the lives of its members, absolutely conceived. It tends only to stifle and

benumb: it robs of individuality. Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations, and the mother of all the city brood, rich as well as poor, overlies us, and we are in danger of suffocating almost before we have learned to breathe. In our last estate we are coming to see what was more easily discernible in our first: the garrison at Fort Dearborn, or La Salle as the emissary of the Most Christian King, might ensure order, but the pursuit and discovery of the beautiful and true, which alone we know as good, they could not ensure. Government, visible or invisible, cannot avail to do that.

And government, let us remember, is naught but ourselves and others like us. Let us not speak distantly of it. One of our sins as citizens is to separate ourselves spiritually from the city which is we. Our own lives coalesce with and augment those of others to form the stress of government. To say that there is no such thing as good government as such is to say that there is nothing beneficial in the dead weight of our own social habits.

The individual initiative which marked the traders who assembled at the Chicago portage both in the earlier day of French and in the later day of American domination looks more promising as a source of good. But it is necessary also to see that there is no such thing as a good individual as such. Self-expression may be complete and untrammelled, without leading to the good life. It is not, therefore, of itself, good.

There is no doubt that Chicago is typical of bourgeois cities everywhere in that its first success derived from its being situated on a spot where trading was good. And trading is essentially individualistic: it is the business of making a livelihood from the exchange of goods between an individual man or an individual group and another. In a completely socialized state there would be distribution, to be sure, but no trading—any more than there is trading in a family.

But there is an allied type of individualism which in later years has been as much an ingredient in the making of our larger cities as the trading impulse. Mass production through the use of the machine has filled the cities of the western world with proletarian populations which even Karl Marx could not have dreamed of; and as for our American cities, it has brought to them cheap labor from the ends of the earth. Chicago's dreadful pentecost has gathered not mere handfuls of Parthians and Medes and Persians and dwellers in Mesopotamia: like its sister cities it numbers its quarter-of-a-million Poles, its quarter-of-a-million Negroes, and its hun-

dreds of thousands of others from every longitude and almost every latitude under the sun. Such hordes of laborers, organized about modern machinery, have provided the entrepreneur with a new and powerful instrument of material self-expression.

And that the effect of individualism, even in its best meant developments, is not good, but actually harmful, may be seen nowhere more clearly than in the technological realm today. Various groups of economists, both in Great Britain and America, have been brought to see that one of the fallacies in our present industrial system is the hypothesis that the material desires of men and women are always unlimited and that "hence the expansion of production to meet these desires can be pushed to infinity."<sup>4</sup> On the basis of this presupposition blandly blind individualism has organized itself to make things without stint or limit. Machines have been used since the early nineteenth century, but it is only since the early twentieth that mass production through the use of automatic machines has really gathered way. According to a writer on "technocracy," it was only about 1915 that this final cataclysmal phase of the industrial revolution began; but its effects are everywhere. One of the vessels, the *Bradley*, which plies on Lake Michigan, is a stone-boat of 15,000 tons. Electrically operated throughout, she requires exactly three men to discharge her entire cargo, one controlling the position of the boat in reference to the dock, one the "pick-up" in the hold, and one the transfer of the stone from elevator to belt—the process of unloading the whole needing only five to six hours! We are told by the "technocrats" that if our factories today were running at the speed of even so short a time ago as 1929, they could not absorb more than one half of the unemployed men and women walking our streets. It is said that the adults of our country with the knowledge of technology now to hand could keep the material needs of the entire population supplied by working four hours a day for four days a week. A British writer says that "in its wider aspect Rationalization (or the modern program of efficiency) is the death dance of industrialism, wherein the twin partners of labor-saving technique and work-demanding theory rush around to avoid recognizing their fundamental incompatibility."<sup>5</sup> Add to this that nations throughout the world are industrializing themselves as swiftly as possible and lifting up justifiable tariff walls against our foreign trade, and you begin to feel the seriousness of the warning that we are at the end of an age. Perhaps readers with historical perspective will be hardly persuaded

<sup>4</sup> Articles in *The New Outlook*, beginning November, 1932. By Wayne W. Parrish.

<sup>5</sup> *This Unemployment*. By V. A. Demant. London, 1931.

that an age can end thus suddenly; and perhaps students of human nature will feel that insufficient justice has been done by the economists of this school to the race's infinite adaptability; but is it not evident at least that we are nearing the end of one more form of unbridled individualism? Self-expansion overreaches itself: our manufacturing centers fall in debacle: the poor run out on the streets: Babylon falls. The merchants which were made rich by her, stand afar off for fear of her torment, saying, Alas! alas! that great city, that was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to naught!

Our present calamities, it must furthermore be borne in mind, are the work not of anti-social men, but of well-intentioned men. The only evil in those men is the general program according to which they work—as individuals, bent upon unconditioned self-enlargement.

Much more quickly the degenerate type of individualism casts up its vicious spawning, for here there is not even the corrective of beneficent intention. The dog-eat-dog morality of the lower strata of our municipal politics is well illustrated in an autobiographical note by Fletcher Dobyns:<sup>6</sup>

In 1903 I was the Republican candidate for alderman of the ward. My opponent, Honoré Palmer, was being vigorously supported by Jimmy Quinn, the boss of the regular Democratic organization of the ward. About a week before the election, when the excitement of the campaign had reached its height, John F. Sullivan called me up and said that he had some important information to give me, and asked me to meet him in a cheap hotel that adjoined his saloon. He led me up several flights of stairs to a dingy little room in the rear of the hotel. In it there was only a table and a few chairs. We sat down, he handed me a fat cigar, and got down to brass tacks at once. He said:

You are making a fine campaign and from the reports that my men give me from all parts of the ward, I think you can lick that Palmer guy, but it is going to be close and you will need every vote you can get. If I could turn over enough money to my men in the various precincts, I could insure your election, and you would be made politically. I know that your backers will put up all the money you need, so here's your chance.

When every man's hand is thus against his neighbor, without restraint of legal sanction, the destructive consequences run swiftly. In less than a generation the dingy little room in the rear of the cheap hotel had become a palatine apartment in the Lexington; the gangster, by processes of terror, ruled the police, the courts, and even large provinces of legitimate business; and the shame of Chicago was that she had to call for federal aid to place one man, her chief enemy, in the penitentiary. And the end is not yet.

<sup>6</sup> *The Underworld of American Politics*. By Fletcher Dobyns. Dobyns, 1932.

*Maher-shalal-hash-baz*: the spoil speedeth, the plunder hasteneth, all around us.

The records do not tell whether the stabbing of the trader John La Lime by the trader John Kinzie outside the entrance to Fort Dearborn was in self-defense, and therefore ethically justifiable, or not; but it is to be noted that the individual rivalry that led to it is a force still present among us, which, both in its ethical, that is, the commercial, form and in its unethical, that is, the criminal, form, engenders one result: social chaos. Self-interest by itself, whether it be decent or degraded, does not make for love, joy, peace, or the other fruits of the spirit: so far as human happiness is concerned, it is barren.

Nor is it for any of us personally to wash our hands of the present situation in our cities, as if we ourselves had had no interests to put forth and so had not added to the confusion. Even churchmen and churches can enter into the pant and scramble of unbridled competition. To say that there is no such thing as a good individual as such is a judgment of ourselves: it is to say that no good comes out of us when the center and end of our activity lies in ourselves.

If neither the force of society bearing down upon and tending to extinguish its individuals nor the forces of personal initiative expanding in and tending to play havoc with society are in themselves good, what then? We seem to have reached an impasse. But here the gentle Marquette, with his ministry of reconciliation, makes his appearance.

If some third force might be found, comprehended in which the will of the city as a whole and the will of its citizens as individuals would no longer vitiate but correct and stimulate each other, a new possibility would be revealed. Evil derives from these powers only when they are left alone. Only when they are autonomous are they destructive; but if they could be held together in balanced mutuality, their evil would be done away.

Now the name of the very force which can hold two differing wills together, without inciting either to dominate, while giving appreciation and encouragement to both, is love. Love was the gospel of Marquette; and Chicago, fortunately for itself, has never been wholly wanting in citizens possessed of the crowning virtue of civic love. It is the keystone of the Christian arch.

Love does more than hold two wills together. It is a positive energy in itself: it creates. Other forces may issue in destruction, but not this one. Those who hope for the future of their city must see this and see it clearly.

When God wants to build a better city—a better philosophy—a better literature—a better human anything—he unites in love the spirit of an original thinker with the spirit of the social tradition. From this union, in which both individuality and society are protected from and minister to each other, the better forms emerge.

Dr. Sigmund Freud and the many who accept his view of life are aware of the dominance of love in all fruitful relationships, though they do not recognize it as the independent energy, direct from the Creator's hands, that it is. They recognize as energies only the two powers corresponding to what we have called the individual and government—the Libidoprinzip and the Realitätsprinzip.<sup>7</sup> All social developments are the result, according to their theory, of the interplay of these two principles alone. Take Dante and the city of Florence for instance. Had the poet-politician lorded it over his city in the manner of the late Medici, or if the city on her part had robbed him of his freedom to be himself; or if he had departed and forgotten her; there would have been no monument to their relationship. But he loved her. "It was the pleasure," he writes of his exile,<sup>8</sup> "of the citizens of the most beautiful and the most famous daughter of Rome, Florence, to cast me forth from her most sweet bosom, in which I was born and nourished up to the summit of my life and in which, with her good will, I desire with all my heart to rest my weary soul and to end the time given me." Because of his love for her he made such an adjustment of his life as satisfied both her will and his own: his thought of her was sublimated: his affection for her gave him to dream of the Perfect City and the Perfect State: as his unfulfilled love for Beatrice found its compensation in the Divinia Commedia, so did his love for his city in the *De Monarchia* and his political studies. By a similar process all the arts, all the sciences, and all social improvements of whatever sort are said to have come into being. The new is born at the point where self-expression and social mandate meet and are matched in love.

The Freudian philosophy, accurate as it is in its description of the process of social development, falters in its interpretations. It is not aware of its need for a third term: it does not perceive that the social development it describes can be the result neither of the power of the *libido* itself nor of the "reality" of circumstance. Ordinarily when two powers oppose each other, one overcomes the other, or they hold each other to a stalemate. But out of this happy stalemate between the desires of the natural man and

<sup>7</sup> *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*. By Sigm. Freud. Vienna, 1930. Etc.

<sup>8</sup> *The Convivio*.



the limitations of his society flowers the whole of civilization. There is obviously a creative factor at work here which is in neither of the two Freudian principles as such. The Viennese philosopher unconsciously presupposes a principle of adjustment; and the type of adjustment that love orders is originaive. It is in this milieu that he who makes All Things New performs his miracles.

Sometimes, as in Dante's case, the love subsisting between a man and his city is one-sided, and the adjustment must be made almost wholly by the man himself; but love enjoys even higher triumphs when the adjustment is mutual. Sublimation does not necessarily wait upon frustration: it follows any discipline, and the two wills make a discipline of any love. If the city loves its people as well as the people their city, the sublimation appears not only as new ideals in the minds of the devoted but as public enterprises undertaken by the government to exemplify its desire for its citizens. Comes the rebuilding of Chicago after the disastrous fire of 1871; the construction of the Drainage Canal that turned backward the course of the Chicago River and brought health to the inhabitants of the city; the Chicago Plan of municipal improvement of 1909; and the like.

The reason that all great cultures, as Spengler<sup>9</sup> points out, are city-born, and that world-culture is the culture of city men is evidently because it is in the city that the tension between government and the impulse toward freedom is at its height. When the tension is transmuted into love, and society and its members seek adjustments that destroy neither, their relationship becomes the very avenue of God's evolving revelation.

To the true love of their city the churches, as the media of that revelation, will dedicate themselves. Their religion will crystallize neither into individualism nor socialism. The Catholic mind is always likely to slip into the heresy of thinking that God speaks to the individual only through a divine society. If you desire to know God's will for you, you have only to cast yourself at the feet of Mother Church. The characteristic Protestant heresy is the thought that God speaks to society only through inspired individuals. The prophet is king. Catholicism clericalized society and deadened initiative when it had its chance, and when Protestantism's opportunity came, it tore society into denominational shreds. But if the *punctum saliens* of development is always a tension, the church of the creative God will strive to live just at the point where social momentum meets individual expression and by applying the touch of love cause the two to lift into a new dimension, as a wave is lifted between two tides.

<sup>9</sup> *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*. By Oswald Spengler. Munich, 1922. (IV., 106.)

We who are churchmen will have a dual duty. As individuals we shall love our city. We shall live for her art and her music, her learning and research. We shall make her not only an emporium for commerce, but a reservoir of humanity, a city of breadth, a city of towering faith, a city where beauty grows. We shall look upon her lovingly, as the artists of her future:

When the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry, as with a veil, and the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky, and the warehouses are palaces in the night, and the whole city hangs in the heavens, and fairyland is before us—then the wayfarer hastens home; the working man and the cultured one; the wise man and the one of pleasure cease to understand, as they have ceased to see, and Nature . . . sings her exquisite song to the artist alone, her son . . . her son in that he loves her.<sup>10</sup>

But as churchmen who are of the city, we shall not fail to think in love of every individual in it. That each may have the freedom he craves! That each man of her millions may know the meaning of liberty! We shall have a hearing ear for all who have been condemned to live incarcerated in the slums—the children, the aged—all who have not had their chance to enjoy the good life. These call to us today in language not unlike the unforgettable words which Mr. Shaw puts into the mouth of Joan of Arc, addressing her captors:

Yes, they told me . . . that I was not to listen to your fine words nor trust to your charity. You promised me my life; but you lied. You think that life is nothing but not being stone dead. It is not the bread and water I fear: I can live on bread: when have I asked for more? It is no hardship to drink water if the water be clean. Bread has no sorrow for me, and water no affliction. But to shut me from the light of the sky and the sight of the fields and flowers; to chain my feet so that I can never . . . ride with the soldiers nor climb the hills; to make me breathe foul damp darkness, and keep me from everything that brings me back to the love of God when your wickedness and foolishness tempt me to hate him: all this is worse than the furnace in the Bible that was heated seven times. I could do without my warhorse; I could drag about in a skirt; I could let the banners and the trumpets and the knights and soldiers pass me and leave me behind as they leave the other women, if only I could still hear the wind in the trees, the young lambs crying through the healthy frost, and the blessed blessed church bells. . . . But without these things I cannot live; and by your wanting to take them away from me, or from any human creature, I know that your counsel is of the devil, and that mine is of God.<sup>11</sup>

Civic love, the one thing needful, will prevent us alike from wanting to take these things away from any fellow-citizen and from forgetting, in our zeal for our own business, the claim of the Great City as a whole.

<sup>10</sup> *Ten O'Clock.* By James McNeill Whistler.

<sup>11</sup> *Saint Joan.*

# A Magnificent and Meticulous Dilettante

LYNN HAROLD HOUGH

SOMETIMES I am tempted to think that I know more about Gamaliel Bradford than any one man has a right to know about another. I never saw him. I never exchanged a letter with him. And—though this seems quite impossible—it is not more than seven years since I first read a book from his pen. The twenty volumes of his, with all the ugly hieroglyphics with which I mark books I really care about—telling of approval and disapproval, of fascinated interest, of joyous appreciation and of angry disagreement—do, however, reveal a very close and intimate companionship with the books in which with such merciless and understanding skill he has analyzed others and quite unconsciously has revealed himself.

Gamaliel Bradford was born in 1863 in Boston and died in 1932 not far from the city of his birth. In spite of the ill health which took him from Harvard almost as soon as he had matriculated and which in a sense pursued him all his days he managed to reach his sixty-ninth year. He inherited an income which gave him a certain freedom and he did a full day's work as a student—at least a profound reader—and as a writer leaving behind more than the twenty volumes to which I have referred. He was descended from William Bradford who crossed in the *Mayflower* and who turned the experiences of the Plymouth settlers into history. Far as his own affections wandered from the Puritan loyalties, the Puritan tradition was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.

## I

Sir Walter Scott suffered from infantile paralysis and could not become a man of action. So he occupied much of his time in celebrating men of action in verse and prose. If he could not be a man of war he would write about men of war. Gamaliel Bradford found himself shut off from the rough and tumble action of the world. So he gave himself to the task of studying and analyzing and appraising and interpreting. To see in men and women what others failed to see became his meat and drink. To paint portraits of men's souls became his great ambition. He loved to find the incident or the phrase which revealed a man's true quality as pages of description and analysis might have failed to reveal it. In the early volume, *Lee, the American*, referring to the period when the great

general was president of Washington College, he says: "A young sophomore was once summoned to the president's office and gently admonished that only patience and industry would prevent the failure that would inevitably come to him through college and through life. 'But, General, you failed,' remarked the sophomore with the inconceivable ineptitude of sophomores. 'I hope you may be more fortunate than I,' was the tranquil answer. Literature can add nothing to that" (page 266). Here you have Bradford in his best form giving a biography in an incident and revealing the true kidney of a personality in a phrase. In the appendix to this early volume Bradford displays more personal enthusiasm than is characteristic of the gentle cynicism of his later years. "It is an advantage," he says, "to have a subject like Lee that one cannot help loving. I say cannot help. The language of some of his adorers tends at first to breed a feeling contrary to love. Persist and make your way through this and you will find a human being as lovable as any that ever lived. At least I have. I have loved him, and I may say that his influence upon my own life, though I came to him late, has been as deep and as inspiring as any I have ever known."

There must have been a certain piquancy to Gamaliel Bradford in writing the series of studies entitled *Confederate Portraits*. The attempt of a New Englander, and a Massachusetts man at that, to enter into the inner lives of these Southern leaders must have been a very alluring, even if a very hazardous, adventure. He is not afraid to use sharp instruments, however. "In short, too much of Johnston's career consists of the things he would have done, if circumstances had only been different." And he can say: "The spirit is wrong, not such as becomes a man ready to give more than his life, his own self-will, for a great cause" (page 15). But Bradford can praise too in a phrase which is like a decoration. "And Stuart's was a real sword" (page 52). He sees these Southern men with his own mind full of older figures: "I have sometimes asked myself how much of this spirit of romantic adventure, of knight-errantry, as it were, in Stuart was conscious. Did he, like Claverhouse, read Homer and Froissart, and try to realize in modern Virginia the heroic deeds, still more the heroic spirit of antique chivalry?" (Page 49.) He is interested in all these men. But Lee remains his hero. Then he turns to the men who are discussed in *Union Portraits*. The riddle of McClellan of course fascinates him: "He was a man of real power given too great an opportunity" (page 32). Hooker asks to be relieved when Howard is promoted over his head: "It was a mistake, of course. He was thinking about his dignity. A

man always makes a mistake when he thinks about his dignity" (page 63). Bradford quotes from Meade another of those amazing sentences which tell so much about the mind from which they come: "I don't believe the truth will ever be known, and I have a great contempt for History" (page 95). After describing a man's ways Bradford himself easily becomes memorable in his comments: "A day of mere quiet is good for everyone. I do not believe Sherman ever had an hour. To live with him must have been like living with a bumblebee" (page 161).

How these warriors and leaders allure the man who must always be a spectator. And already how he is beginning to be able to make up for what he has lost by being a kind of God of Judgment. Had he "psychographed" himself how his deft pen would have made very exquisite mirth for itself expressing the gratification his sub-conscious vanity received from sitting upon a throne of judgment in an invalid's chair.

The study of Americans always captivated Gamaliel Bradford. His *American Portraits, 1875-1900*, show his mind in full action in this field. There is Mark Twain. Very quickly the student of his life and writing sees that, in spite of the world-wide laughter this master of mirth set going, the effect of his actual thought about life was "bitter and withering." "Indeed, no word indicates better the lack I mean in Mark than 'sunshine.' You may praise his work in many ways; but could anyone ever call it merry? . . . He cannot give you merriment, sunshine, pure and lasting joy" (page 19). "I lived for ten years with the soul of Robert E. Lee and it really made a better man of me. Six months of Mark Twain made me a worse. . . . And I am fifty-six years old and not over-susceptible to infection. . . . It is precisely his irresistible personal charm that makes his influence so overwhelming" (page 27). There is that subtle man Henry Adams who lived in a nation called Harvard when he thought he lived in a nation called America. With all his cynical sagacity Adams was less likely to be cynical about women: "In after life he made a general law of experience—no woman had ever driven him wrong; no man had ever driven him right" (page 38). You get a more characteristic observation, in its revelation of his cynicism, however, in the words of Adams: "The planet offers hardly a dozen places where an elderly man can pass a week alone without ennui, and none at all where he can pass a year" (page 45). Bradford is almost at his shrewdest when he says: "Adams can double the weight of unsolved problems upon you" (page 48). And perhaps for once he really reaches the root of the matter when he declares Adams "needed not to think, but to live. But he did not want to live.

It was easier to sit back and proclaim life unworthy of Henry Adams than it was to lean forward with the whole soul in a passionate if inadequate effort to make Henry Adams worthy of life" (page 56).

## II

The cynical Harvard professor had been profoundly and happily impressed by the influence of women upon his life. Gamaliel Bradford turned with quickened interest to the mysterious and potent quality which has belonged to notable women, to their strength and their sagacity, to their clear gaze upon life and perhaps their subtle secret of hiding from themselves that which they did not wish to see. He brought to the task his own quality of understanding sympathy and of almost feminine intuition. In the first of the *Portraits of American Women* we find him saying: "Men often claim a specialty of home loving and decry a woman's restlessness. They do not realize that they shake off the burden of life when they enter their own doors. A woman takes it up" (page 6). He finds a subject to his taste in Sarah Alden Ripley, of whom Senator Hoar had said she was one of the most wonderful scholars of her time; of whom President Everett had said that she could fill any professor's chair at Harvard; and of whom Professor Child had said that she was the most learned woman he had ever known. She was a very practical woman as well as a scholar. "There were the pressing cares of daily life where mouths were many and means were little. Sarah had her full share of these and met them with swift and adequate efficiency. It is true, she groans sometimes over 'that dreadful ironing day'" (page 39). "New bonnets, old prayers, botany, chemistry, Homer and Tacitus jostle each other on the same page with quite transparent genuineness and charm" (page 43). "She learns Spanish by herself at seventy and reads *Don Quixote* with relish, complaining only that the pronunciation is impossible for her" (page 47). "Her one inspiring passion, from youth to age, was to use every power she had in making just a little more progress into the vast, shadowy regions of obtainable knowledge" (page 57). It is all summed up in the last paragraph devoted to Mrs. Ripley: "In Pater's *Imaginary Portraits* Sebastian van Storck says to his mother, 'Good mother, there are duties toward the intellect also, which women can but rarely understand.' No man ever understood those duties to the intellect better than this woman understood them" (page 64).

Of course, Emily Dickinson was sure to prove of engrossing interest to Gamaliel Bradford. And here again his power to find the revealing and



interpreting phrase is extraordinary. "But her immense capacity of being stimulated could not resist a book" (page 231). The sudden and unexpected literary comparison appears here: "She was a sister of Lamb. She was also sister of those most delicate creatures of the whole world's imagination, the clowns of Shakespeare" (page 247). "So I see her last as I saw her first, standing all white, at her balcony window, ready to float downward upon her unrolled carpet into the wide garden of the world, holding eternity clutched tight in one hand and from the other dropping with idle grace those flower joys of life which the grosser herd of us run after so madly" (page 256).

### III

It was inevitable that the curious and adventurous mind of Gamaliel Bradford should lift the questions involved in the relation of women to husbands, especially when these husbands were great figures in the life of the world. So we are not surprised when we turn to his volume *Wives*. And full of all the odd and dramatic contrast of outer vicissitude and inner response he finds the life of the wife of Benedict Arnold. To experience girlhood in assured social position and happy prosperity and then to be buffeted about the world following the fortunes of Benedict Arnold was to have one's mettle completely tested. Mrs. Arnold was very beautiful and brightly eager about having a part in the social life of the great world. When Arnold's treason had made England her home, her father, with whom she constantly corresponded, made the suggestion that it might be cheaper to live in the country. The suggestion is entirely unwelcome. Gamaliel Bradford comments: "The notion of associating with trees and flowers and birds would be ridiculous. They have not clothes or manners or distinction or even souls and what would life be if one could not mix with these?" (Page 73.) Mrs. Arnold loved her husband and stood by him through everything. But what did she really think of him? asks Gamaliel Bradford. It is a difficult question, he admits, "If you want to get the truth, you have to watch, to divine, to develop with the subtlest care" (page 87). Once she expresses the hope that his motives and not the unfortunate termination will be considered. Once she declares that he was never induced to deviate from rectitude. So she declares, and the man of whom she makes this declaration is Benedict Arnold!

The study of Mrs. Jefferson Davis brings us into direct contact with a most able and percipient woman. Toward the end of the existence of the Confederacy she wrote: "The cohesive power of a strong government is

needed when the disintegrating tendency of misery is at work. . . . I am disheartened with popular sovereignty, still more with state sovereignty, and fear both are fallacies" (page 192). Here we see the working of a mind of first class political intelligence. And it is characteristic of Gamaliel Bradford that his mind has fastened upon these words and he has seen their significance.

#### IV

The subtle curious interest in what is really going on in the minds of men grows by what it feeds on. Soon the student sees how sadly often some strange flaw all but mars or altogether mars the structure of life and power a man is so ingenuously building. A half-pathological, half-scientific interest in the alloy which men mix with their gold grows in the mind of the investigator. This at least was the experience of Gamaliel Bradford and the result is seen in *Damaged Souls*. In this sort of study Aaron Burr is material waiting for the skillful hand holding its sharp instruments of dissection. One can imagine with what partly disguised relish Bradford took up the intimate study of this grandson of Jonathan Edwards. The fascinated interest in humanity, in all possible human experiences, with his strangely insatiable amours, reveals a Burr who had little or no conscience where sensations were concerned and was curiously lacking in the depth which suffers deeply when in Sainte-Beuve's powerful phrase it realizes that it has abused the sources of life. With all this he "was always temperate in food and drink. He made his soldiers work, fight, and love him" (page 99). Of the duel with Hamilton Bradford says: "On that July morning on the Heights of Weehawken, Burr tossed his future in the air and shot it to pieces like a glass pigeon, just from a whim of spite or was it really from a notion of honor?" (Page 192.) You learn a good deal about Bradford as well as about Burr in these sentences: "Burr enjoins upon Senators the importance of adhering to their regular rules of order; for he says 'on full investigation it will be discovered that there is scarce a departure from order but leads to or is indissolubly connected with a departure from morality.' Think of these words from Aaron Burr, who cared just as much for morality as he did for order! And is it not a delightful bit of humor that the passage should have been handed down by Adams, poor gaunt-souled John Quincy Adams, eaten up by conscience, who had never known an hour of amusement in his whole life? Adams and Burr!" (Pages 103f.) In closing his discussion of Burr, Bradford refers again "to that inimitable sentence in

the Senate speech." "It is said that Senators wept. I imagine the angels wept also. Fortunately not even the tears of the angels can ever blot out that sentence" (page 120).

## V

This Republic is only a part of a very much larger world. We scarcely need to say that this greater world tugged at the imagination, allured the fancy, and called for the exercise of the intelligence of Gamaliel Bradford. The volume *A Naturalist of Souls* deals entirely with figures belonging to life on the other side of the Atlantic. One understands how inevitably Bradford was drawn to a study of Walter Pater. It is not quite so obvious that he should have wanted to investigate the poetry of Donne. The studies of Xenophon, Pliny and Ovid easily fall into line. We expect Bradford, notwithstanding, indeed partly because of all his Puritan blood, to claim his citizenship in the life which flowered in the subtle intelligence of Greece and in the urbane strength of Rome. And we can imagine his individual quality of happiness in peering into the depth of the mind of Dumas trying to get behind its cool clear light. His recurrent interest in religion partly prepares us for his study of Francis of Sales. In this volume the American spreads his wings and rejoices in the air of far lands. *Bare Souls* also deals with a group of transatlantic characters. Perhaps it is with a quiet and yet potent sense of wicked pleasure that Bradford attempts to explore the personality of Voltaire—"the lean, wrinkled, withered face; the vivid, mocking eye, which seemed to see the underside of everything, the figure shrunken and shattered by the fierce, restless intelligence which soared and plunged and darted into the deepest hiding-places of human folly and vanity and wickedness" (page 25). One comes upon shrewd sentences like this: "To the end of his life he retained those curious streaks of petty parsimony which are apt to appear in persons who have suffered financial pressure in younger days" (page 33). "He dodged and cheated and lied and stole. Oh, yes, very likely. But he did it all with the most winning simplicity of spirit. Here again one notes something peculiarly childlike about him, as there was about the vanity of Cicero, though they were both rather sophisticated children" (page 55). Gustave Flaubert gives him a sense of how costly a thing style may be. "With all his enormous labor he cannot produce more than a half dozen small books in thirty years. A sentence sometimes cost him hours, even days, of toil. A page has to be re-written and re-cast and re-conceived until it is finally accepted as perfect, if it ever is" (page 247). Once Flau-

bert's mother had said to him: "The rage for phrases has withered up your heart."

But over the sea Gamaliel Bradford found women as well as men. His *Portraits of Women* deals with nine of them. Lady Mary Wortley Montague, of course, captures his interest: "Altogether not a winning figure, but a solid one, who, with many oddities, treads earth firmly and makes life seem respectable, if not bewitching" (page 22). "People fret and torment, till even her equanimity sometimes gives way. 'I am sick with vexation.' But in general she surmounts or forgets, now with an unpleasant, haughty fling of cynical scorn, 'For my part, as it is my established opinion that this globe of ours is no better than a Holland cheese, and the walkers about in it mites, I possess my mind in patience, let what will happen; and should feel tolerably easy, though a great rat came and ate half of it up'; now, as in her very last years, with a gentler reminiscence of her heroic teacher: 'In this world much must be suffered, and we ought all to follow the rule of Epictetus, "Bear and forbear"'" (page 29). There is a touch of malice in his treatment of Jane Austen: "One subject only is too sacred for mocking—the British navy" (page 58). "As Lamb well observed, the great majority of Shakespeare's characters are lovable. How few of Miss Austen's are! Yet it may be that at twenty-one she knew better than Shakespeare" (page 65).

He writes with subtle understanding of famous French women. Of Madame De Sevigne he says: "Yet she had always and everywhere that deepest and most essential element of human kindness, the faculty of putting herself in another's place, and her sense of the laughable in trivial misfortunes was never so keen as her ready and active sympathy in great" (page 120). The tale of Madame du Deffand and Horace Walpole offers opportunity for discriminating analysis: "She had the sheer salt of French wit, too, could tell a story inimitably, or strike off a stinging epigram" (page 139). "Under all her misery, all her discontent, all her boredom, she was aching for love" (page 148). "Madame du Deffand, at seventy, fell in love with a man of fifty. This world-worn, life-wearied, pale, frail, dusty heart was suddenly set beating by another as cold, as disillusioned, if not as bored as hers, that of Horace Walpole, a bachelor, a dilettante, and an Englishman" (page 150). "A passion like this, full as it is of tragedy and pathos, will at times tempt sarcasm. The sincerity and fine intelligence of Madame du Deffand make it impossible for a sympathetic reader even to smile at her. But Walpole was by nature abnormally sensitive to ridicule, as he himself confesses. To be praised as if he

were a god and loved as if he were an opera tenor by an old lady of seventy, whom he knew to be living in closest intimacy with the most critical and mocking wits of the world, placed a man of his temper in an exceedingly difficult position" (page 152). How Bradford does enjoy studying these great French ladies! "All my soul was at the window," Bradford quotes Eugenie De Guerin as writing (page 193). All of his own mind was always at the window as he looked upon these fascinating French women with their exquisitely distilled sense of life and manners and their extraordinary power over the gracious gesture and the memorable word.

Two attempts on a fairly large scale were made by Gamaliel Bradford to apply his principles of psychography (to use the ugly word of which he was so fond) to the study of men who lived on the other side of the Atlantic. In each case he gave a whole volume to setting forth the results of his study. One was *The Soul of Samuel Pepys*. The other was *Darwin*. The Diary of Samuel Pepys was written in shorthand. It was a devastatingly revealing document. "The use of a shorthand practically amounting to a cipher indicates a desire for secrecy, which was indeed indispensable, since an indiscrete perusal of his record might have brought him to the gallows" (page 19). "But we find in the Diary a terrible sincerity, a cool, unadorned, direct, fierce transcription of the vagaries of vice and folly, which no mere literary artifice could ever approach" (page 27). Pepys' wife, we are told, knew his weak as well as his strong points "and was not going to be fooled about either. Yet I gather that she loved him. . . . Whether she would still have loved him, if she had read that terrible Diary, I cannot say" (page 183). "It is everywhere evident that the Puritan tradition had got hold of him somehow, and haunts him and hangs about him, even in his wildest vagaries" (page 211). Bradford quotes a revealing comment, however, which Pepys makes when some misdoing of another man was discovered: "This being publicly known, do a little make me hate him" (page 211). If a man would tell what most men would never dream of telling, what light would it throw upon his life? When the man is a libertine by temperament and often in practice, but a libertine with an immense respect for virtue and an ardent desire to be considered virtuous and confides the whole tale of his dalliance to his Diary, you have a book made for the inspection of such a curious and analyzing mind as that of Gamaliel Bradford.

The interest in Darwin was entirely different. For at the touch of Darwin, Bradford believed that an old world had gone tumbling down.

And sometimes he suspected that he had lost everything he cared most about in the ruins. "When I was sixteen," says Gamaliel Bradford, "I read the *Origin*, and I think the impression it produced has never been obliterated" (page 245). He describes this impression as "a sense of being aimlessly adrift in the vast universe of consciousness, among an infinity of other atoms, all struggling desperately to assert their own existence at the expense of all the others" (page 245). "And it was Darwin, the gentle, the kindly, the human, who could not bear the sight of blood, who raged against the cruelty of vivisection and slavery, who detested suffering in men or animals, who at least typified the rigorous logic that wrecked the universe for me and for millions of others" (page 247).

## VI

Bradford could be at the same moment very near to a character whom he was interpreting and very far from him. His memorable book on *D. L. Moody: A Worker in Souls* contains this sentence: "So we see that Moody enjoyed three of the intensest excitements and intoxications known to man: that of stirring a vast congregation by his own unaided power, that of moving men to do his bidding in the practical affairs of this world, and that of saving souls; but of the three, the latter, though perhaps not the most immediately intense, is assuredly the most varied and the most enduring" (page 298). But over against the subtle Epicureanism of this sentence one ought perhaps to quote another from the same volume. "The simple fact is, that, if God does not exist, the universe is but a wilderness of barren horror" (page 304).

There is only space for rather slight reference to the volumes issued during the last years of Bradford's life. *As God Made Them* contains the study of Daniel Webster. Nothing less than genius could have isolated for special consideration the scene when after delivering a dying address on religious topics he was so weary that his eyes closed. "When he came to himself again, he looked about eagerly and exclaimed, 'Have I—wife, son, doctor, friends, are you all here?—have I on this occasion said anything unworthy of Daniel Webster?'" (Page 38.) "And then there comes the due wail of Greek choral response: 'No, no, dear sir.' 'No, no, dear sir.' And the drama is complete" (page 39). That the thing should have occurred is almost incredible. That the episode should be related with such potency of naked irony is almost as amazing.

*Daughters of Eve* contains an inspection of the personality of Catherine the Great. "But even Mr. Bernard Shaw, who is not inclined to



excessive enthusiasm, seems impelled to a conclusion not unlike Princess Dashkov's: 'She not only disputes with Frederick the Great the reputation of being the cleverest monarch in Europe, but may even put in a very plausible claim to be the cleverest and most attractive individual alive' (page 173). "Apparently she regarded the succession of love affairs as merely a series of companionate marriages such as delight the respectable Judge Lindsey and his devout followers. . . . Catherine seems to have been blind or indifferent to the effect of her example in unhinging the marital relation through the country from top to bottom" (page 162). ". . . she was not only great, one of the most energetic, creative dynamic feminine personalities that ever existed, but she was also in many respects thoroughly lovable, and one may even venture to say that she was good, though she was an Empress and she had her little eccentricities" (page 196). And what an odd light the last sentence throws upon the mind from which it came.

*The Quick and the Dead* brings us once more as we move through its pageant of personalities into the presence of Woodrow Wilson. With an almost cruel skill he quotes Wilson's own words: "A man may be defeated by his own secondary successes" (page 78). Then he quotes the other words of Wilson: "I would rather fail in a cause that I knew some day will triumph than win in a cause that I knew some day will fail" (page 78). Then there is the comment with a touch of corrosive acid: "Yet even here how eminently characteristic is the reiterated 'I knew.' He knew, he knew, he always knew, for he was a creature of brains" (page 78).

*Saints and Sinners* contains a chapter, "God's Vagabond, Saint Francis of Assisi." "The marvel of Francis is that he practiced what he preached. But then he believed in God and a future life, and perhaps that makes all the difference" (page 53). But even about Saint Francis the last word is not without its sting: ". . . enjoying, engrossing—and dominating souls" (page 73).

The posthumous volume, *Biography and the Human Heart*, contains as its last human study a chapter, "The Letters of Horace Walpole," the second writing of Gamaliel Bradford about the social butterfly with darting observing eyes and cynical brilliant brains. "Few men could be better qualified to be the literary reporter of this brilliant period than Horace Walpole. . . . If he did not love humanity he was always interested in it, in all its moods and phases. He studied the complex motives of great statesmen . . . and it amused him to see that those

motives were sometimes as great as the men and sometimes of a pettiness all the more astonishing for the mass of results that flowed from them. . . . The wafting of a billet-doux, the chatter of gay youths about a card table, the elopement of a beauty, a duel, a robbery on the highway, an odd funeral, or a brilliant wedding—all these thin and glittering threads which make up the tissue of common experience—how deftly Walpole twists and turns and disentangles them” (pages 232 and 233). So it was with Walpole. And so it was with Gamaliel Bradford.

## VII

The book *Life and I* has the astonishing sub-title, *An Autobiography of Humanity*. In a sense it is a volume in which Bradford's ego becomes all of the Cosmos. It will always remain a document of curious and even astonishing interest. In this volume he refers to an experience which in his study of Saint Francis is frankly made personal. I will quote the reference in the later volume. “When I was twenty and was engaged to be married, my love and I came to see the world for the time something as Saint Francis saw it. We too felt that we should give up luxury and wanting, should discard the comforting equipment of material life to which we were accustomed, but of which so many millions were destitute, and adopt voluntary poverty for the good of the world and our own souls. As a letter of the time expresses it, ‘We want to build a little house somewhere, perfectly plain and poor, and live there in every way just as peasants would live.’ We were twenty and simple and foolish. Our parents and relatives and friends ridiculed us and scolded us and reasoned with us, and in the end forced us to let our ideals go—for better, for worse?—I wonder” (page 44 of *Saints and Sinners*). Clearly in mood and in personal attitude toward the realities of experience Gamaliel Bradford had traveled far from this naïve idealism to the somewhat flippant cynicism of his little poem, “Exit God,” from which we will quote a few lines:

The followers of William James  
Still let the Lord exist,  
And call him by imposing names,  
A venerable list.

But nerve and muscle only count,  
Grey matter of the brain,  
And an astonishing amount  
Of inconvenient pain.

I sometimes wish that God were back  
In this dark world and wide,  
For though some virtues he might lack,  
He had his pleasant side.

(Page 282 of *Life and I*)

One must approach what Gamaliel Bradford wrote of his mother with a certain gentleness, indeed a certain reverence. But what he wrote frankly we may frankly quote: "When she died I was three years old and she was under thirty. I have naturally no recollection of her, but I have always cherished her memory as an ideal of many many things that life might have given to me and never has. If I were to meet my mother as she was when she died what would she mean to me? I can conceive of her only as one of the young things of her age, whom I see daily about the streets, perhaps flippant and tawdry, perhaps sensitive and charming, but in any case so infinitely remote from my present self that I could address her only with benevolent patronage or with uncomprehending awe. No, I do not think I want to meet my mother" (page 277 of *Life and I*).

Rather strangely I cannot get out of my mind Gamaliel Bradford's dislike of one very remarkable woman. Of Frances Willard he writes: "She was a splendid woman, only I could not bear her, and would have walked miles to avoid meeting her, and that got into my portrait too" (page 7 of *Wives*).

But Gamaliel Bradford never lost the power to see the strange loveliness of some of the lives which find their way into self-forgetfulness. "There is just an endless doing of little, tawdry, insignificant, unregarded, hateful things that others may live more comfortably, others who have often no appreciation and no gratitude. Doubtless even in lives like these it would be possible to find the 'I' lurking somewhere, but to seek it would be an ungracious task" (page 271). Bradford quotes a crude impressive story to illustrate what he means. Summarized but still in the language of the narrator this is the tale: "Once a week Irene has an old woman out to the house to do the washing. Drab-lookin' creature. Athletic. . . . The old one was waitin' on the table. She looked as tired as me. . . . I went over, took the old lady by the arm. 'Look a' here,' I said, 'You come on over a' sit down at this table. I'm going to wait on you for a change.' 'Nobody ever waited on me in my life,' she said, 'I've waited on them.' 'Well,' I said, 'you're goin' to be waited on this time.' . . . Say, you should a' seen that poor old dame eat. . . . I felt like I'd done something worth while in my life, if I'd never done it before' . . . it some-

times seems as if such experiences as this were the most beautiful thing in our beautiful, hideous world" (pages 271f., in *Life and I*).

I suspect that these books and even my summary references to them have told no end of secrets, many secrets about the men and women Gamaliel Bradford dissected, and far more about himself than he could ever have thought. And why we ask did a subtle cynicism so eat in upon the finer fiber of his mind? Was it because a butterfly with a mind must pay for his irresponsibility in cynicism? Or had Gamaliel Bradford sometime been wounded by life so poignantly that he never dared to touch that ugly and unhealed sore and so became a cynic because he did not quite dare face the tragedy of life? If like the great critical humanists he had found luminous and permanent standards to which to be loyal and by which to judge, what a difference that would have made. As it is, with a gentle understanding laugh, with a touch of malice in its music and the suggestion of a brittle bitterness behind it, he went to his grave. And with all his unconscious and conscious self-revelation I suppose he carried with him the last secret reason for that phrase, "our beautiful, hideous world."

# The Oxford Group in Toronto

## Two Views

### I

GEORGE C. PIDGEON

SOME years ago a forest fire wiped out a town in northern Ontario. The men of the town fought the fire in the bush with a fair degree of success until the electric wires were burned through, and then, with the power cut off, their water supply failed and there was nothing to do but flee. The fire was then beyond the railroad tracks which ran between the town and the forest, and it was hoped that the gap cut by the road would stay the progress of the conflagration. As one man crossed the tracks and walked through the town, he noticed a row of houses and thought: "Well, these houses are safe for a time anyway; the sparks cannot reach them." Suddenly at the gable of one of these houses a ball of fire appeared, and in an instant the house was in flames. So with house after house. The fire had become atmospheric and was breaking out everywhere.

It is doubtful if any religious movement ought to be called a revival until it too becomes atmospheric, flashing from soul to soul. Many of us know to our cost the story of religious efforts which go no farther than they are pushed, and which stop the moment certain leaders stop pushing. No fire is kindled in the souls of those impressed which inspires them to make the cause their own and to put themselves into it. Districts are never profoundly stirred until there is a spontaneity in the movement, and a new spirit takes possession of men which drives them where it will. The spiritual movement which was started in Toronto by the visit of the Oxford Group now has this character. Many people, who had no personal contact with the Group or any of its members, are being changed, and their souls are kindled with a fire that comes from God. Some of the most interesting cases with which the writer has had to deal have been of this character. It is easier to-day to speak about spiritual experience, to pray with people, and to touch the central issues of life and character than it has been for years. There is a tenderness in worship and a consideration for one another in discussion that make a heart-fellowship possible. Conviction of sin is going to the root of personal and family sinfulness and of business and social failures, insisting on a thoroughgoing renewal. This change issues in conscious union with God, and under the divine leading the energies of the soul are turned in a new direction.

There was a general expectancy abroad before the Oxford Group arrived. The throngs that greeted them everywhere showed how widespread the interest, just as the personal interviews which followed their public meetings revealed the depth of the longing. For years the churches had been interested in "The Kingdom of God Movement" and had been praying for revival, and calling on their people to "prepare the way of the Lord." The depression had turned the hearts of men away from earthly things, and had led them to seek realities which the changes of time could not touch. The Oxford Group gave it new definiteness and direction and brought a message and a method which kindled the fire.

Every true revival has the following features:

Men are brought under conviction of sin. The best in them rises against the men they have been and the things they have done, and conscience pronounces judgment on them in the name of God.

Those convicted are led into an experience of God and his love, an experience which fills them with the joy of his salvation. The new life in God leads to thoroughgoing moral changes; sins are confessed, wrongs righted, restitution made, and the whole life brought into the open.

The "changed" are charged with a new moral earnestness. They have discovered a treasure of untold worth, and they are burning to share with others what God has given them.

Then, as noted above, the new spirit becomes atmospheric and takes possession of people in all directions.

All these features have appeared among our people. Conviction of sin has seized many. Often the disturbance of conscience is so serious that nothing in the message to which they have listened is sufficient to account for it, and often it takes hold of people who have not been listening to any message in particular. Evidently the Spirit of God is at work within, fulfilling the Saviour's promise that he would "convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment."

Sometimes the light breaks with startling suddenness. One evening a young man came to a friend in deep remorse over his failures and the consequences of his mistakes; they talked over the way of salvation, prayed together, and he decided to take the step; on the way to his car the light of love dawned, and his sky has been cloudless ever since, even through the serious readjustments that his new life in God required of him. Many who have been Christians for years have been led into the radiance of the Christian life, and some have had experiences that filled them with power.

Surprising acts of restitution have taken place. Impurity, dishonesty,



personal wrongs of a thousand different types have been confessed and put away, and the life started on a new level. This is insisted on as essential to continued fellowship with God and his people.

The awakened are taking the initiative in new forms of service. A large church in Hamilton invited a group from Toronto to take charge of a Sunday evening service and a keen critic declared that he had never heard testimony so perfect in every particular. The eagerness of the people throughout the country to hear about this work at first hand is providing a unique opportunity for witness-bearing. Every Sunday the products of the new movement are going into the churches around and testifying with marked effect to the work of grace within. They are accepting responsibility for spreading the good news and are thinking out carefully the problems and perils that it presents. The spiritual influence is spreading silently in all directions, and the church's cause for gratitude is easily understood.

It would not be fair, however, to represent the reception given by Toronto to the Oxford Group as uniformly favorable. Wherever it goes it seems to arouse strong antagonisms as well as strong loyalties, and the reactions to its appeal in Toronto have been as varied as in other places. Perhaps this was to be expected; spiritual leaders so original in their method and so pronounced in their convictions are sure to cause surprise and consternation in many quarters. Similar effort had this effect in other days; look, for instance, at what the Wesleys had to suffer.

Some openly condemned the movement. Chief among its enemies is *The New Outlook*, a religious journal belonging to the United Church of Canada. While the work of the Group was at its height, this paper fired a broadside against it; in one issue a vigorous editorial, an article by a young student just home from Oxford, another by a psychologist from a mental hospital, and a couple of criticisms from Britain condemned the movement root and branch each from his own angle. This called forth a protest from a number of the ministers of the United Church, the writer among them, and then the columns of the paper were closed against discussion. The *Presbyterian Record* also had a long leader criticizing the movement adversely. Back of this opposition is a genuine disbelief in this type of religion and religious effort. These people dislike both its spirit and its methods. They question the depth and reality of the changes it professes to bring about and believe that its effects cannot but be harmful.

Some of the tributes showered on the Group are of quite as doubtful character as many of the criticisms. These people welcome it as bringing the church back to her real mission from the wild excursions which she has

been taking into the field of moral and social reform. There are always those who condemn the church for failing to preach the gospel when the church is honestly trying to apply the gospel to life as she sees it, and encouragement from these people, if listened to, is more dangerous than the sharpest criticisms, because it really is aimed to call the church away from her prophetic ministry.

A larger number of men than both these groups together recognize many good qualities in the effort while pointing out certain dangers to which it is exposed. Criticism of this sort has been sympathetic and constructive, and the leaders will be well advised to give these strictures earnest consideration and to profit by the encouragement and support given. At the same time groups of ministers, who are in thorough sympathy with the movement and who say frankly that none of the dangers against which we were warned have actually appeared, are meeting to consider how to help the movement and preserve its values for the entire church.

The effects on the ministry have been the most remarkable feature of the work here. Meetings were held for ministers every day and were profoundly impressive. The addresses given by Dr. L. W. Grensted, Oriel Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion in the University of Oxford, deserve particular mention. He helped many out of the difficulties which they felt about Confession, Guidance and Sharing, and put many of the issues on a basis of reason where all could stand. One of the men said: "I was ready to be a fool for Christ's sake, but Professor Grensted showed me that it was not necessary." Other meetings were no less penetrating. Usually men who address gatherings of ministers take for granted the minister's inner life; these visitors took no one for granted. Simple honesty requires us to admit that even appeals to which objection was taken brought men under conviction of sin, and, through the confession that followed, lifted them into new lives of purity and power. Everyone was challenged to re-examine his own heart and life and to search his ministry to see if it was wholly of God. The result is a transformation of many ministries. A number of the younger men have met every challenge and have developed new resources of power and grace. Their souls and their message are aglow. There have been some dramatic changes which caused widespread comment. It is interesting to note that the best men among us have felt the deepest need and have received the richest blessing. There is no doubt that the changes wrought in the lives of our ministers open a new day for the Church of Christ in Canada.

The answer given by the leaders of the Oxford Group to criticisms of

the limitations of the Movement seems conclusive. They say that they are not attempting to cover the church's entire program. The reason is that they are a part of the church and assume that the church is carrying on her work all the time. They are doing a bit of the church's work which she has been neglecting. The response they are receiving calls the church to carry on with new zeal her own proper work of exposition and interpretation, prayer and gospel preaching, inspiration and leadership, and she will find men ready to listen as they have not been for years.

The church has a contribution to make to this new movement. There are two stories of the primitive church's treatment of similar situations that are suggestive here. The first is found in Acts 8. 14-17. A revival had broken out in Samaria. A new inspiration and outlook had come to the church in Jerusalem through the ministry of Stephen, and his martyrdom had heightened the one and widened the other. The young men had caught his vision and burned with his passion for the cause, and when the persecution which had killed him turned on them and chased them in all directions, they bore testimony to Jesus, the life-giver, to all who would listen. When Philip gave his word of testimony in Samaria a conflagration started and swept over the district. The church in Jerusalem heard of it, and sent their leaders, Peter and John, to take charge of the work. When they came they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit who had not as yet fallen on any of them, a prayer that was gloriously answered. The meaning of this lies on the surface. Wherever the Holy Spirit is at work the church belongs. Wherever the Holy Spirit has brought men into the Kingdom by way of the new birth, the church should take charge of the results. The church can add to the experience of joy-filled converts a measure of grace and power greater than they could otherwise receive.

The scene of the next story is Antioch. (Acts 11. 19-26.) Some of those young followers of Stephen tried the gospel on Greeks as they traveled northward to Antioch. We can almost feel their surprise and exultation in the story as we read that the hand of the Lord was with them and that a great number believed and turned unto the Lord. The results were exactly the same in character as those which had been produced in Jerusalem. When they went on to Antioch the fire started there and burned even more brightly. To them the church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas, described first as "a good man," that is, warm, sympathetic, able to enter into other people's experiences and to see things from their point of view; next, "full of the Holy Spirit," and able, therefore, to lead others into the same blessed enduement; and also full of "faith," that is, with a faith in

God which believed greater things possible than had yet been done, and with a faith in man which believed him capable of reaching levels never before attained. First, Barnabas saw and acknowledged that this was a genuine work of grace; second, he brought to them an interpretation of their experience, and, third, he brought them new resources, particularly by his enlistment of Paul, which soon made the church in Antioch the center of a movement for world-wide evangelism.

Look again at these stories from another angle. In both cases salvation broke out in quarters previously deemed beyond its range. The Holy Spirit was going ahead of the thought of the church and leading her into fields strange and new. Jews despised Samaritans, and in spite of Jesus' example, it must have been difficult for loyal Jewish Christians to escape this prejudice; yet here these Samaritans are yielding a generous response to the gospel. In Jerusalem the disciples had failed to appreciate the universal elements in Jesus' teaching and were assuming that the only way of salvation lay through the Jewish Covenant; here the gospel produced the same results in the Greek as it had produced in the Jew. It is difficult for us to understand the sacredness of his special privileges to the Jew of that day, but here this new spiritual power was bursting through the bounds which tradition had built around the grace of God, and in ways unheard of it was capturing and changing men never before considered eligible. What happened? The church recognized the Spirit in this new guise, and broadened her bounds to take in the new facts. Further, the church contributed to the new movement gifts and graces which it could not otherwise have acquired. Barnabas found a situation in Antioch which might easily have become dangerous. If ever new converts had the right to regard the church as hopelessly antiquated and case-hardened in conservatism, Antioch had the right to think it of the church in Jerusalem. Some of those conservatives wanted to outlaw their Christianity altogether, and others wanted to stamp it as of inferior grade, as we read in Galatians 2. Yet you cannot imagine Antiochean Christianity without Barnabas and Paul. In spite of its narrowness and reactionary spirit the old church brought them enlightenment, spiritual resources and leadership otherwise impossible. On the other hand, the movement in Antioch not only enriched the church, but enlarged its scope and vastly increased its resources. Can you imagine the difference it would have made in modern Christian history if the Church of England had had the same discrimination and charity in Wesley's days? The church needed what the new movement had discovered and the church had a contribution to make to the new movement.

Certain things are clear. If this movement is, as a great American educator and religious leader has just said, "the most vital religious movement of our time," it is the church's opportunity to open the way for the fullest service it can render, to co-operate with and re-enforce this movement in every way possible, to bring to it gifts which can be bestowed through the church alone, and to care for and train those who are quickened by it. It will not do for the church to ignore the movement. It is not enough for her to go on with her work as if nothing extraordinary were happening in her field. This movement has been producing results which the church has not been producing to anything like the same extent in recent years, and this spiritual achievement is the occasion for a new effort to bring the old message of salvation home to men, and a new ground of thankfulness to the God of all grace for his intervention on his people's behalf and for the new resources which he is adding to his church's store.

## II

JOHN McNAB

TORONTO is slowly recovering from an attack by the shock troops of the "Oxford Group" movement. The religious life of the city was thoroughly exposed to the onslaught of the disciples of Dr. Frank Buchman as very little criticism of the methods or antecedents of the groups had been allowed to filter through. And Canada had never before examined nor come to close grips with "House-Party" religion. Preceded by the most efficient press propaganda that any religious organization has ever controlled, the movement swept in upon Toronto.

Their knowledge and application of mass psychology left nothing to be desired. All preparations for their reception were arranged on a lavish scale. The advance guard held a luncheon meeting with outstanding city ministers and laymen at the Royal York. The formal invitation to visit Toronto was conveyed to them at an afternoon meeting in the most magnificent board-room in the city of Toronto, the gilded chamber of the recently erected head offices of the Canadian Bank of Commerce. Ten thousand invitations on high-class stationery were issued through ministers and leading business men, to be carefully distributed for the opening reception. And the Premier of the Province of Ontario was invited to give the formal welcome. The group leaders insisted that they did not want crowds, but extensive preparations were made to accommodate thousands. The slightest hint to the masses that you do not want them provokes the curious to



resort thither in vast numbers—at least that is what happened in Toronto.

The suspicions of the public were carefully disarmed by informing them that there was nothing new in the movement. Opinions of leading clergymen, who seemingly had touched only the surface of things, were quoted by the Rev. Samuel Shoemaker, Jr., of New York, to re-enforce their statement that the movement had nothing new. Not since Wesley, we were informed, had such a dynamic movement swept Christianity. And in the chaotic condition of to-day the majority of Christian leaders stand ready to welcome any means of spiritual uplift. The spirit of defeatism which has impregnated the business world has also taken hold upon the churches. Certainly Christianity needs a new challenge!

Now that they have come and gone, we would readily admit that on the surface there is nothing new, but on probing beneath the surface some of us found disquieting things. Disquieting not for our own lives, but alarming when weighed in the light of the past and the future of the Christian religion. The Buchman movement found a ready entrance into the religious life of Canada because of its reiterated assertion, "We have got something that you have not." And that promised something seemed to be release from sin and from the sad condition of a life half surrendered to Jesus Christ. The release was to come through "sharing," then restitution was to be made, and the more complete the restitution the more certain the individual would be of power.

Scarcely one thoughtful minister in the two or three hundred that foregathered in the King Edward Hotel accepted *in toto* the technique of the group. All had violent reactions to one or other of their methods, but never have I seen such a gathering of thoughtful men with their critical faculties so dormant. Because of the urgent need of our own time, we were prepared to meet more than half way the peripatetic band of socially prominent missionaries that invaded our city. And the standards of the group—absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness and absolute love—were so lofty that many other things could easily be overlooked. Most were aware of the wrong emphasis on the word "absolute," since that is a characteristic of God alone. Were the Oxford Group claiming a sort of sinless perfection? In the open, not at all, but within the group the emphasis comes perilously near to such a claim.

Despite their lofty standards it was apparent to those in close contact with them that their twin principles of "sharing" and "guidance" provide a method of letting themselves down easily. "Sharing" is confession; both in private and in public confessions are made. Such confessions



must take place "under four eyes," at least. These evangelists have adopted a new technique to bring in penitents. "Sharing" is the only form of edification at their meetings—they read no Bible, they have neither teaching nor preaching, and only on rare occasions is a verse or two of a hymn thrown in to allay the suspicions of pious people.

The constant "sharing" of the group members usually penetrates a weak point somewhere in those who attend several meetings. The psychology of this approach is much akin to that of the patent medicine vendors in their advertisements, who describe various symptoms of illness and their cures, until the reader thinks that he also is afflicted and so telephones the nearest drug store for a box or bottle of that compound. "You cannot see," said Shoemaker, "what we are trying to do in one meeting, you must come again and again." And they test the meetings to find how many are present for a third or fourth time. It is this repeated return to the "sharings" that starts the emotional whirl that is intenser than any Kentucky revival. The group claims that there is no emotional appeal. True, it is different from the old-time camp meeting, but the secret is in the repeated appeals to the emotions.

The sin-sharings are carefully stepped up from behind the scenes. One might characterize it as a silent gear-shift that slips from low to high without the onlooker being aware of the process. The group claims that everything is spontaneous, and that things just happen, but there is in truth very little spontaneity. An inner circle carefully prepares the "sharings" of each meeting. The "sharings" may commence with a trivial occurrence—one hides his magazine so that his friend may not read it first, then there may be a confession of evaded customs duties, a story of a life devoted to cocktails and questionable pleasures. As a climax there may be brought forth a "sharing" that tells of a moral downfall in a parked car.

The final morning meeting, in a first series for ministers, found its climax in sex-sharings. One clergyman, after reviewing delinquencies in his ministry before being "changed," told the complete story of his marital relations. "Marriage is monotony," was the wisecrack with which he began his revelations. Delicately, but without any reserve, he pulled back the covers from his sexual life. Some writers had hoped that Buchman had thrown aside his earlier sex-obsession, but the leaders carry this hidden danger as a cherished possession, a mixture of Freudian psychology and the jungle. Little wonder that the editor of the *New Outlook*, the journal of the United Church, declared that "one meeting in which sex matters were discussed would remain a hideous memory."

Another aspect of "sharing" is that which causes them to refer to themselves as "Twentieth-Century Franciscans." They profess to have a common purse, which after much probing a newspaper reporter found is carried by Doctor Buchman. However, the group is scarcely Franciscan in its choice of a shelter—the most palatial hotels have been chosen for their headquarters. The workingmen of Montreal voiced a protest in wonder at their choice of the Ritz-Carlton, declaring that their seclusion there prevented the poor from resorting to them with troubled souls. We were further amazed when we found that apparently leading members of the group have readier access to the common purse than the less conspicuous. Although the hotel suites are chartered by group arrangement, all are responsible for their own meals. Some eat in the main dining hall, some eat in the cafeteria, and others forage in cheap restaurants. Still others depend for their food on invitations from those assigned to them for "sharings." After one Canadian campaign, Doctor Buchman slept for seventy-two hours, being disturbed only for his meals in his room.

Thoughtful ministers found much difficulty in separating between the group practice of "guidance" and magic. And those ministers who have young people "changed" by the group are complaining already about their inability to direct the magical elements in guidance. One of the most influential of their younger leaders, accompanied by a young woman, arrived to speak in one of Toronto's largest churches. The minister inquired in the vestry who would speak first—"We never thought of that," said the young man; "let us have a quiet time for guidance." They sat down, drew out paper and a pencil and waited. After a few minutes of silence, the young man looked up and said, "What did you get?" "That the young woman should speak first." "So did I," was the reply. Such guidance is but a little distance removed from the planchette or the ouija board of the spiritualists.

Examples of guidance might be quoted at great length; unfortunately, the nomenclature has become a catchword on the streets. The local committee had planned for the younger members of the group to visit Toronto University, but as adverse criticism had begun in the students' paper they received guidance not to go. At another church the minister was first informed that the two delegates that were to speak at his morning service were ill and could not come. The substitute who came inadvertently informed the minister that the others were not sick, but had received "guidance" to rest in bed for engagements later in the day. One of these, a mid-day dinner engagement in a fashionable home, was religiously kept.

Lest anyone might conclude that this action was that of a neophyte in the movement, the young woman thus guided was a disciple of ten years' standing. Guidance as thus practiced seems not only to dispense with reason and experience, but leads to a life that is casual and produces a type of character that is responsible to no one.

Several parties of students visited their headquarters to inquire what they taught. Were the foundations of their theological outlook Barthian or otherwise? One and all were turned away with the information that the group had no definite teaching. They have no taboos. They share experiences, but they have no teaching ministry. Mr. Shoemaker, speaking to a meeting of ministers, stated that all we stand for is a passage from Augustine, "Love God and do as you please." One eminent professor who felt that even their idea of God was vague, and that their approach was purely psychological, dared to put a question to Canon Grensted. The interviewer said, "I consider there are two necessary things in the Christian religion. The first is our inner consciousness of God, and the second is the objective reality of God." Canon Grensted promptly replied, "I deny that second." For Professor Grensted, the Bampton lecturer of 1930 and the outstanding scholar of the group, God is purely subjective.

The textbook of the movement is, *For Sinners Only*. Like all other things, it just happened, but when one penetrates their seeming spontaneity one finds that most of these accidents have been carefully planned. However, the author distinctly tells us that one thing in their practices that he cannot accept is that of sex-sublimation. I spent two hours in conference with Dr. E. MacMillan both hearing him and asking him questions. I asked him what this thing was that Mr. Russell could not accept. And Doctor MacMillan told me that since being changed he had been completely purged of all physical desire. This is their doctrine of sex-sublimation which is not proclaimed by them from the housetops. It is a preserve of the initiate. When I told this to a small group of clergymen, two of them immediately exclaimed, "That is pure Buddhism."

One of our clergy announced as his subject, "What do you mean by life-changing?" And he questioned whether changing as practiced by the group is the new birth. Many find a gaping discrepancy between what the church knows as conversion and what they call life-changing. However, that delightful mystic, Evelyn Underhill, says that we can accept the two as analogous. But can we? In one of the large Presbyterian churches, a man who, with his wife, had been "changed" while the group was in Montreal stated that he had been shaken up and had made restitution to

customs but he did not know whether his life was any different or if his experience could be called conversion. This was referred to one of the leading members of the group, who replied, "Is that act not evidence enough?" The case of Judas comes to mind; did not he return the silver?

Many have arisen to point out that the group is solely concerned with changing the individual and has no social passion. Their reply to this criticism is that the panacea for all social evil lies in changing big men; by doing that they think that they will change the world. This city has watched with interest the loudly advertised change of at least one prominent employer of labor and is wondering whether his care for his employees is to accord with his professions of change.

The crucial question still remains when we ask concerning the groups, "Whither bound?" Up till now they have been working in sympathy with some churches, and reiterated promises have been given that they will never form a cult of their own. The groups, we were told, need the churches and the churches the groups. But there is no harmony among the churches after the groups have passed on. Ferguson says in *The Confusion of Tongues* that wherever Buchman has gone he has created divisions. And "sharing," which they really elevate to a sacrament, separates congregations into sharers and non-sharers. Brian Roberts says in the *New Statesman and Nation* (London), "The seeds of organization, according to all precedent, cannot but grow, more especially as the Movement's claim not to compete with the churches cannot be entirely substantiated; other movements begun in the same way have become well-organized sects." Keen critics like the Rev. C. M. Chavasse, Master of Saint Peter's Hall, Oxford, after watching them for several years do not hesitate to call them a cult in the making. In days of economic chaos curious cults have always taken root and flourished. Shall we, who are the accredited Christian leaders, be hypnotized into sponsoring a sporadic, ephemeral, and untrustworthy technique that must eventually lower the standards of Christian living?

# The Church Can Help Men to Live

WILLIAM F. KOSMAN

ULTIMATELY, there is but one problem—that of life itself. How to live—this, reduced to simple terms, is man's chief desire and concern.

In modern society, the problem is exceedingly difficult. For one thing, the present industrial order is inimical to personal and human values; for another, it discloses, if it does not create, a sinister quality within the human mind itself which jeopardizes all plans for human betterment. In whatever domain man finds himself master to-day, in the inner, deeper realm of his life he is being baffled, thwarted, defeated. Scientific skill has fashioned for him marvelous machinery—and to relieve the dull monotony of his days and nights he has recourse to movies, prize fights and jazz. He has reduced his relationship to his fellows to a science—and lives in mortal dread of his neighbor. He has learned to exploit nature—and starves in the midst of plenty. Unstable in mind, a prey to phobias and superstitions, running hither and yon in search of quick cure for his ills, he not only fails to shape his environment to his deepest needs, but allows the essentials of life itself to escape him.

Richard Roberts speaks of a young medical student who after graduation became associated with a London consulting physician of world fame. He was asked one day to make an analysis of the case cards. In doing so he found that no less than 73 per cent of the patients had nothing organic the matter with them. He had expected to find the proportion of such cases high, but the actual percentage startled him. He made inquiry among other consulting physicians and found a consensus of evidence that between two-thirds and three-fourths of the people who brought their ailments to them had no organic trouble. The physician with whom he was working had written on many of the cards the significant verdict, "Does not know how to live."

It is not to be concluded, as Doctor Roberts points out, that this 73 per cent represents *malades imaginaires*. Their malady is real enough. But it is a malady of the inner life, and as such is beyond the competence of orthodox medicine. The fact is that life is not determined biologically. "We have discovered," says Dr. W. H. Faunce, speaking of the college world, "that physical exercise, even the best, leaves our central problem untouched. That problem lies far deeper than the body. It lies in the

hidden recesses of the mind." Not only in the college world, but in every other circumstance, health ultimately means wholesome conditions in the secret places of the soul.

Furthermore, the economic factor, while tremendously important, is by no means determinative. "What is the use of making people rich," asks Bertrand Russell, "if the rich themselves are miserable?" The emptiness that characterizes the lives of multitudes of the rich gives point to this inquiry and is abundant evidence of the truth of the saying enunciated long ago that "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth."

Of course, material wealth is potent. Much that is indispensable to satisfying and abundant living is dependent upon its possession. Studdert Kennedy used to speak of people who had lived so long in the city of mean streets that the mean streets had got into their very souls. The fact is that they were doomed to mean streets by a social order that denied them exit therefrom. In the present economic situation, the absolute necessity for bread is only too apparent. The most blind must see that without bread men cannot live. Men must and will have it and any social order that denies it to them is doomed. But by all that makes men truly men, they cannot live by bread alone. Whatever the order of existence which men may fashion for themselves in Russia or elsewhere and however lavishly it may ultimately supply material necessities and comforts, it can never minister to man's deepest life unless cognizance is taken of great hungers in the soul which material things are powerless to satisfy. In the end, man's life is determined by neither biology nor economics. He lives, if he learns to live at all, in a realm that includes and transcends them both.

Obviously, the great mass of men take but little interest in the attempt of philosophers and theologians to establish by argument whether or not their quest of the good life has cosmic support. They are willing to take this "on faith." What they want most is to live the good life here and now and thus prove its possibility.

Nor are they much interested in metaphysical speculation concerning the nature of God and reality. The problem of life is upon their hands and whatever the nature of God—yes, though there be no God—they must live. If religion is to be of any concern to them, it must have meaning for them here and now as they fight the battles of daily life and handle the raw materials of commonplace existence. The Marquis of Lothian in his address at Toynbee Hall some time ago gave it as his opinion that "Religion is realizing that if it is to recover its ancient influence among men, it must



prove the practical utility of spiritual truth in daily life in developing health, intelligence and character in the individual and order, unity and happiness in society." Unless this is true, religion will remain esoteric and impotent and men will have none of it because it is something apart from their daily existence and does them no good. Theoretical discussion can wait.

Clearly, here is charted the way of opportunity for the church. By making available the spiritual resources of religion and teaching men to exploit them for daily living she will serve this age at the point of its deepest need. As she shows men how to open themselves to the power God would send into their lives, she will help them to overcome the crippling incapacities of their own souls and to achieve that inner harmony which the distress and difficulty of daily existence so much demand to-day.

It is not to be denied, of course, that in endeavoring to do this, the church must pay attention to the environment in which men live and which, in so many particulars, is potent to make or mar life. There is but little doubt that the present social order must be remade before men and women can really live. In the meantime, however, the broken bodies and crushed spirits of its victims are a first charge upon the Christian Church. The growing disregard of personal values makes it imperative for the church to increase her efforts to preserve them. Even within the present imperfect social system, much can be done to help human beings to higher levels. Indeed, it is a question whether the best strategy for the church in its effort to remake society is not to try to do so through remade individuals—individuals freed from personal ills, delivered from prejudice, possessing balance and acumen and strong enough and self-reliant enough to endure the pain incident to a break with the environment when that is necessary for health of soul.

To the multitudes of men and women, personally impoverished by a devitalizing social order and victims of their own lack of understanding and folly, the church must minister with increasing earnestness and with ever more adequate technique. Thus she will serve this age at the point of its deepest need and follow in the footsteps of Him whose name she bears and whose chief concern was that men live an abundant life.

To render this service intelligently and effectively, the church must undergird her activities with at least three basic convictions.

The first is that man is a creature of emotions. Recent studies in psychology have made it clear that the mind of man is not an intellectual machine capable of grinding out clear-cut decisions and infallible judgments. On the contrary, it is something very much mixed with emotion

and man's judgments and actions invariably are emotionally conditioned. The far-reaching effect of this upon the strategy of the church is not yet clear to many. It is all tremendously significant, however. At the bottom of many a sinful life lies not insufficient intelligence nor perverted will but warped emotions. The individual may be at the mercy of forces he does not understand and cannot control. Furthermore, while, as we have seen, environmental conditions in themselves are greatly potent, the individual's emotional reaction to them is more significant. The difficulties he experiences in making satisfying adjustments may be caused by inner emotional conflicts and disturbances.

To help the individual to live, therefore, it is necessary, first of all, to help him set his emotional house in order. "Conversion," said William James, "is the process, gradual or sudden, by which the self hitherto divided and consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy becomes unified and consciously right, superior and happy." In the degree in which such a conversion of the self is brought about the individual begins to live. If this could be done, as Bertrand Russell intimates it may be done some day, by the process of increasing or decreasing the secretions of the ductless glands, the matter would, no doubt, be quite simple. It is supremely doubtful, however, whether it can ever be done in such fashion and it is assuredly not a simple matter. Its accomplishment requires painstaking labor and intelligent zeal.

One ally available to the church is the use of a psychological technique. Here is an instrument divinely forged and ready to hand and if the church would help men to hold life together in the face of the disintegrating forces of modern society, she must learn to use it forthwith and with power. Employing this technique and constrained by a love of men, she must teach children and youth, men and women to understand themselves and their fellows, to eliminate baseless and degrading fears, to resist prejudice and passion, to resolve emotional conflicts and achieve an ordered and harmonious emotional life. Thus and thus only will she open the gates of life to men.

Furthermore, the church must deepen her conviction that religion is a power to live by. This has largely been lost sight of. Religion has been considered in part an ethic and in part a philosophy. Primarily, it is a dynamic, a way of living richly and potently. To make it such, actually, in the lives of men and women and to enable the individual to appropriate the deep and genuine resources of religious faith is the purpose for which the Christian Church has come to this hour.

To this end, there must be, first, a personal and particular ministry to the individual in which he is helped to achieve that poise and balance of soul for lack of which so many lives fall short of effectiveness or go to smash completely. When all is said and done, it is in the emotionally stable, intelligently comprehending and harmoniously integrated self that the possibilities of attainment and well-being lie. To guide children and youth, men and women, in the creation of such selves must be a first charge upon the religious education of the present day. It should be the chief objective, also, of pastoral ministrations and the main function of the pastoral visit or interview, as well as the aim of all evangelistic effort.

Joseph Fort Newton points out how the ground has been prepared for this sort of ministry. He says: "A group of new sciences has been delving into the depth of the soul, making a map of an unknown country, charting our hidden powers, analyzing our basic instincts, lighting up the laboratory in which motives move, showing how our emotions twist into complexes and how the knots may be untied, inspecting our most intimate impulses and aspirations; and they have much to tell us. A preacher need not be an expert psychologist or a working psychiatrist in order to learn how to help men where he was helpless before, or nearly so." Dr. Walter M. Horton makes the prediction that "the Catholic confessional and Protestant pastoral counsel will become conscious of their psychological crudities and may eventually rival the medical clinic in professional skill while they surpass all specialized techniques in their capacity for getting at the very root of the human problem." The Christian Church will come to grips with her peculiar present day task in the degree in which this prophecy is fulfilled.

Moreover, if men are to experience religion as a power to live by, they must be taught how to worship. Religion means little to multitudes of professing Christians because they cannot worship. They have never really learned how. They know worship as a convention or perchance as a form, participation in which is more or less satisfying to the soul, but of worship as a technique for tapping deep spiritual resources and thus equipping oneself to live or for catching vision of great realities and thus acquiring depth of life and power of endurance; of worship as the dedication of self to interests other and higher than one's own and thus unifying warring instincts and marshalling divided energies; of worship as absolute surrender to God and thus finding "the peace that passeth all understanding"—of such worship they know next to nothing.

Here is fertile soil whose surface the church scarce has scratched. In spite of her two thousand years of history and notwithstanding the unde-

niable fact that multitudes of lives have been enriched by her ministry during that time, a primary task of the church still is to develop effective techniques of worship and teach them to her children. In the peace-giving, problem-solving, integrating power of intelligent, spiritual worship lies the means through which the church can serve humanity to an extent hitherto unrealized.

To achieve these ends, the church must deal increasingly with the individual as such. Too often, in the work of the Protestant church, the individual has been lost in the mass as the drop of water is lost in the river. If he is to hold his life together to-day and achieve effective personality, he must be "fished out" and treated as a conscious, personal and spiritual entity, in his own right and name.

The individual's problems are his own. His environment is something peculiar to himself. He may be said really to live in the degree in which he becomes and is himself—his best self. It is folly to try to heal his ills and assist him to break through an imprisoning environment to personal freedom and power while herded with his fellows *en masse*.

Certainly, Jesus never tried it. He looked at men not in the mass, but as individual, personal beings, and he ministered to them as such.

"He took the suffering human race,  
He read each wound, each weakness clear;  
He struck his finger on the place,  
And said, "Thou ailest here and here."

Dr. E. F. Scott contrasts the view of Jesus with that prevailing before his time. "It had always been the nation or the city or the social class," he says, "which was taken as the unit. The individual had value only as a member of the greater whole, and it was Israel or Athens or Rome which was the subject of divine favor. Jesus discovered the worth of men as personalities. . . . It is implicit in his teaching that all thought of man in the aggregate is due to an illusion. There is no such thing as 'humanity,' but only a multitude of separate human souls."

Following the example and teaching of Jesus, the church must put the individual at the center of her life and work. The Kingdom of God germinates only in the inner life of men in true fellowship with God. Congregational worship, class study and group discussion, while by no means to be minimized, must be supplemented by efforts to minister to the individual directly. However far-reaching the reorganization of the work of the Protestant church which such a change in its objective may make necessary, it

is not to be avoided. Constantly the church must discover media and technique for making her ideals effective in the life of the individual and for bringing him into direct touch with the source of her power. Like her Master, she must lay her hands upon him and create in him sight and understanding, free him from the demoniac possession of forces he does not understand and cannot control, help him resolve his conflicts and achieve inner peace and harmony through devotion to One greater than himself and a Cause big enough to challenge and enlist his all.

Here lies the way out for the church. The sense of futility which hangs like a deadly pall over much of the church's activities will be dispelled as her ministers and members undertake this work for which she potentially is fitted and which the conditions of this age make supremely necessary. Nothing will more quickly send streams of courage and hope through the arteries of her body than the conviction that she is doing something that is vital to men and women and indispensable for the survival and perfection of human personality.

We have been wandering far in the fields of metaphysics. It is time to consider the imperative needs of a broken and bruised humanity. Let us not deceive ourselves. Only by serving the age in the Spirit of God and by His power, can the church survive.

## Book Reviews

### Contemporary American Theology.

Vol. I. Edited by VERGILIOUS FERM. New York: Round Table Press. \$3.

"If a philosopher is not a man, he is anything but a philosopher," says Unamuno. "It is the man that philosophizes." That is even more true of the theologian, for the roots of theology are in religion and religion is the most personal and intimate affair of a man's life. In the books a man's theology begins with general principles that he lays down. In reality his theology expresses his total reacting to the world in which he lives; it begins with his boyhood home, the religious fellowship in which his faith began, the influences of friends, teachers, books, his active life and all the rest.

It is proposed by the editor in the two volumes, of which this is the first, to let a group of leaders in American theology tell in frankest fashion the story of the forces that have molded their thinking and the conclusions at which they have arrived. The result is a volume that is as interesting as it is informing. Macintosh of Yale describes his empirical method. Knudson and Brightman of Boston show how their personalistic philosophy underlies their religious conceptions. Wieman of Chicago emphasizes the open mind and the scientific method, with only one fixed conclusion, namely that God cannot be personal. (A curious example of the anthropocentrism that he condemns, since he makes the kind of personality which he finds in man the measure of what is possible in God.) Horton of Oberlin writes modestly of his development in a "Rough Sketch of a Half Formed Mind." Rufus Jones gives the theology of a mystic. Personalism and mysticism appear combined in J. W. Buckham. W. E. Garrison contributes

personal experience and poetry under the title, "Transcendental Pluralism." J. G. Machen tells the story of one who has resisted the "current of the age" and held to a religion of supernatural redemption. E. F. Scott, B. W. Bacon, and S. J. Case tell of their work in biblical criticism.

But more than all this, we have the interesting experiences of personal development in the thought life of these men. In almost all cases the early background was conservative. The transforming forces in religious thought of the past generation are set forth in concrete and personal fashion. By and large and allowing for exceptions Germany figures far more than Great Britain. Philosophy and historical criticism play a much greater part than scientific thought and social changes. Barth hardly appears on the horizon. There is increasing emphasis on empiricism, but not a large appreciation of living religion as the source of theology and of faith as the distinctive attitude of religion and so necessarily significant for theology.

One is rather perplexed at the basis of selection for a work on contemporary theology which includes five men in New Testament and church history who leave the distinctive problems of theology almost wholly to one side. These last named, however, do contribute to the total picture of the field of religious thought, supplementing the more pertinent and very valuable contributions of such men as Macintosh, Knudson, Brightman, Wieman, and Buckham.

Aside from the biographical aspect, which makes it most interesting reading, this volume with its successor will make an admirable introduction to the problems and tendencies of present-day religious thought, as well as a suggestive study of the movements of religious thought in



the past generation. The editor's essay is an admirable introduction.

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**Pastoral Psychology.** By KARL R. STOLZ. Nashville: Cokesbury Press. \$2.

THE pastor of to-day feels that while he knows much about the medicine for mental and spiritual ills he knows too little about the patient. *Pastoral Psychology* is the summing up of what has been discovered in the fields of normal and abnormal psychology, psychopathology, and of neurology, psychiatry and psychotherapy. Doctor Stolz in his *Pastoral Psychology* has gathered together what is most important for the pastor in these fields and presented it in such a way as to be of very great service to many pastors. This work is not intended to prepare a pastor to deal with mental illness, but to give an insight into the causes of mental and spiritual maladjustments and some suggestions as to remedies. Doctor Stolz begins his study with the organization of Personality in the light of the modern understanding of Personality as a development determined by original endowment and environmental forces, and shows how this growth must be promoted, guided, and guarded in youth and adolescence. As an expert in religious education the author shows himself well equipped for this field. The author then deals with the possibility and technique of adult personality changes under the influence of religion.

Having given the basis in normal development Doctor Stolz then gives a discussion of abnormal development arising through the suppressed complex and the inferiority, fear, and sexual conflicts caused by these various complexes. The chapters on "Protective Responses" and

"Adjustment to Reality" are especially scientific and helpful in opening the eyes of the pastor to many obscure motives to action.

After a statement as to means of diagnosis through dreams, word association, and analysis, all of which are beyond the scope of the pastor, the author gives many helpful suggestions as to how the "talk cure," "confession" and consultations may assist the spiritual physician in the cure of souls committed to his care.

*Pastoral Psychology* may be recommended to the pastor who has not specialized in this work as the simplest and most helpful work in this field now in the market. R. D. HOLLINGTON.  
Garrett Biblical Institute,  
Evanston, Ill.

**Moral Man and Immoral Society.**  
By REINHOLD NIEBUHR. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.

No one interested in education, philosophy, religion, social psychology, economics, or political science—and these take in a wide circle—should fail to read this stimulating book. It is a provocative presentation of certain aspects of the problem of securing social justice through social control. The author particularly examines three agencies of social control, namely, intelligence, morals, and coercion. He does not question the potency of intelligence and morals in controlling conduct as between individuals within the same group, but the disturbing thesis of his book is the contention that these two forces are highly impotent when it comes to intergroup relations unless combined with the third agency, namely, coercion. In fact, he gives to coercion a place much more significant than he does to intelligence or morals when it comes to intergroup control.

Individual man is moral and intelligent, and unselfishness and truth influence him, but social groups are immoral

and their relations to one another will be immoral and unjust unless coercion is applied. No amount of truth, love and goodwill will do unless there is also coercion. The author tells us nothing new when he points out that the group is less moral and more selfish than the individuals in it, but to maintain that the group as such is virtually immune from control through religion or education is to enter debatable ground. It is not surprising that this book has aroused a storm of protest from religionists and educators, especially the former. Speaking merely as a layman, it would seem to the reviewer that Mr. Niebuhr is turning his back on what might be called the social gospel and is virtually saying that there is one moral code for the individual and another for the group. The author by no means looks upon education and religion as negligible factors. He admits, for example, that these forces will help reduce the egoism of the group which he designates as the privileged class and that personal character is of importance in a political leader. Perhaps he would be willing to concede that the more effectively the educational and religious institutions are functioning in a group the less will be the need for coercion. In that case the pessimism and defeatism which is in evidence in his presentation would be less marked.

To the student of government and politics, Mr. Niebuhr's presentation is both gratifying and inadequate. It is gratifying because it recognizes the importance of those institutions which are necessary in a civilization to maintain "law and order"—using this phrase in the broadest sense and not in the sense in which Mr. Niebuhr justifiably accuses powerful groups of using it. Call it the state, or what you will, the implications of this book point to the necessity of a powerful agency or group of agencies which will at the proper time use the coercion which the author deems so vital.

Who shall use coercion? Obviously, not one individual against another. This would be anarchy. Shall any organized group do so? If so, we have a suggestion of the pluralist state, although there is no allusion to pluralism in any chapter. It is in this connection that the discussion of the use of politics seems inadequate. How are we going to set up the all-important agency which will be wise and just enough to use coercion, or to decide between two groups who are using coercion against one another? This is the question political scientists would like answered. But why should Mr. Niebuhr be expected to solve a problem that no one else so far has satisfactorily solved? However, if the use of coercion is deliberately advised and anarchy is to be avoided, it is quite pertinent to make some inquiry about the limitations of its use.

Mr. Niebuhr acts repeatedly as a dignified debunker. His debunking activities operate in so many directions that almost every group which he touches is affected. Ardent proletarian that he is, he attacks the cynicism and brutality of that class, while on the same pages he castigates the middle class for its hypocrisy and sentimentality. The Marxian philosophy is characterized as a religious overbelief rather than a scientific truth. Neither pacifists nor militarists will rejoice over his conclusions. Those who look hopefully for a communistic revolution as well as those who desire to maintain the status quo will find statements which are very distasteful. The liberal who desires evolutionary change will receive rude shocks, but the hopes of such an one are not entirely obliterated. In fact, it is hard to think of any large group which will be jubilant over Mr. Niebuhr's conclusions. Perhaps that is reason enough why it will rank as an outstanding piece of work. The text abounds in terse, pithy statements. Almost every chapter contains epigrammatic sentences which

might well be added to a book of select quotations.

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### Out of My Life and Thought. By

ALBERT SCHWEITZER. New York:  
Henry Holt and Company. \$2.50.

THIS is the translation of a German autobiography which admirers of the subject have been keenly anticipating. It is the fullest and most personal account of this remarkable man. In it the incidents of his life and the developments of his thought are both told with a simplicity that makes a fascinating story.

The narrative, beginning with Schweitzer's boyhood in an Evangelical parsonage of Alsace, follows him through school experiences and university days in Strassburg, Paris, and Berlin. Woven into this history, and into that of the next years which were spent as an instructor in the Theological Faculty at the University of Strassburg and as curate of Saint Thomas Church, of that city, are the threads of musical study, of work upon an introduction to the life and art of Bach, and of investigation into the results of critical study of the life of Jesus. This last interest led, in a series of writings concerning Jesus and Paul, to his theory of the eschatological outlook of Jesus and of the early church. Before these writings reached the press, however, he had begun medical training, and there follow eight years crowded with scientific study, university teaching, pastoral duties, and musical activities. Then came the departure into French Equatorial Africa, several years of medical pioneering, wrecking of his enterprise by war and his internment as an enemy citizen, the difficult re-establishment of the jungle hospital and its subsequent growth.

Out of this record of Schweitzer's life there arises a sense of contact with a great and inspiring spirit. Two major impres-

sions are left. The first impression is of this engaging personality with its sympathy for suffering and its unlimited impulse toward relief. "It seemed to me a matter of course," he writes, "that we should all take our share of the burden of pain that lies upon the world. Even while I was a boy at school it was clear to me that no explanation of the evil in the world could ever satisfy me . . . there is only one thing we can understand about the problem, and that is that each of us has to go his own way, but as one who means to help to bring about deliverance." The second abiding impression is of a conviction which Schweitzer expresses, that in these features he manifests what is natural in man and ultimate in Being. It was in such a devotion to human deliverance from evil and to the realization of the kingdom of God, expressed within "a world-view which expected the speedy end of the world" but of which it was intrinsically independent, that Schweitzer locates the significance of the historical Christ for the Christianity of to-day. Man to-day, he adds, alone in following Him, and not in thought or speech, "learns to know Him as One who claims authority over him."

Whoever expects the autobiography to make Schweitzer's course more understandable to the practical mind will be disappointed. No explanation of the "inexplicable Alsatian" appears, other than that given by his feeling of the fact of unrelieved suffering as a moral duty. The quest for any further explanation arises from failure to recognize his acceptance of the final authority of the impulses of reverence for life.

For readers of Schweitzer's previous writings there is a more justified disappointment. The work is not wholly new or unitary, but is assembled from earlier sketches with extension of the treatment at certain points. What it adds in particular are personal impressions, more of his history as a musician, and interesting

details of experiences as a prisoner of war. The impression of the genius and spirit of the man is here, but not so clearly and strongly as in the writings by which his thoughts and activities were first presented. The knowledge of Schweitzer, as distinguished from information about him, is still best found in *The Philosophy of Civilization*, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, and the series of letters which make up the volumes *On the Edge of the Primeval Forest* and *More From Lambaréné*.

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**Alcohol and Man.** Edited by HAVEN EMERSON. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$3.50.

WHEN seated in a courtroom listening to attorneys as they sum up their cases one often becomes confused as to which side is right. The attorney for the plaintiff thunders away with his ammunition of facts, logic and oratory. It appears as though he must be right in his contentions. Then comes the attorney for the defendant. He makes a counter attack, disproves facts, out reasons logic and out orates oratory. It appears as though he has proven his case. But what about the real truth wherein the two sides disagree, for right at this stage our senses are more or less muddled and our brain, not logically trained and consequently not able to readily separate the wheat from the chaff, fails to penetrate the problem. In this muddled mental state it is always a treat to listen to the Judge as he in his turn charges the jury. With his trained, poised mind he does with ease and precision exactly those things which our untrained mind fails to do. He picks out the essential truths and elemental facts and presents a clear picture of the case to the jury, is impartial, states in faultless diction the limits to the claims

of the two sides, charts the course to be followed by the jury and scrupulously refrains from making a decision.

As I have read this volume, *Alcohol and Man*, I have been impressed with its resemblance to a Judge's charge. It takes no sides, wet or dry, omits no essential testimony. The language is clear and understandable, its technical reports are set forth in non-technical terms, it avoids half-meaning words, such as may or may not—it says does or does not. The whole volume speaks with a positive note which carries with it a sense of authority and it completely covers its subject. When the layman has become weary and confused from volumes of facts, logic and oratory either or both wet or dry, he will find a satisfactory guide to reason in reading this book.

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**Saint Elizabeth.** By ELISABETH VON SCHMIDT-PAULI (translated from the German by Olga Marx). New York: Henry Holt and Company. \$2.50.

IN this romantic story of Saint Elizabeth the author tells of her short, beautiful life in a style of poetic and imaginative beauty which lends colorful vividness to every description of castle, court, festival or crusade. In amazingly concentrated phrases she gives brilliant flashes of insight into the significance and meaning of those early days of the thirteenth century. "A secret urge was prodding the world into movement" and already we see restlessness and change. The ideas of a world-empire were giving way to those of nationalities and states, and the domination of a world-church with the Pope at the head was slowly being questioned. Against the background of this restless age, Elizabeth, lovely daughter of King Andrew II, of Hungary,

emerges in 1206, and holds the charmed attention of our delighted gaze from the time we first see her in her silver cradle bounding in stately convoy to Germany to be brought up in the Castle of Thuringia under the care of her fiancé's parents, till at that midnight hour of her death, when she was "lit with such radiance that none could look at her."

Gay and beautiful, loving all life and seeing God in everything, we wonder at her blameless childhood and at her way of beckoning her companions on to seeing God everywhere and guiding them to praise Him. We marvel at love's compelling power that surmounted the determined opposition of an alien court and led Louis IV, her betrothed, into knightly surrender to God's will and unwavering loyalty to herself in her passion for service. Their union was companionship on the highest plane, their friendship, that of lovers, who together "went on their way to God." Already listening for God's voice, she heard the call of Francis of Assisi whose wandering feet found her palace, and answered in an ardor of renunciation until his gospel of poverty and ministry to the sick and the poor became her passion. The story of her achievements, always against the background of knights on crusade, of wandering minstrels and traveling monks, enlarges the scope of the book and makes us understand something of the struggling world into which her gay beauty and gentle, tender sympathy, lifted all womanhood to a higher idealism. And so it seems, as our author says, "God wanted to give the earth something very beautiful" and he sent this "sister of Saint Francis." "He had shown His will clearly by guiding destinies, kindling hearts, giving voices to the stars and shifting people hither and thither. . . . When God wants to heighten the amazing splendor of the world by the glory of a single human life, then He is only sending us a faint

echo of a long-ago Christmas when He prepared the way for the coming of His son." Elizabeth's destiny was to live in an age of unrest, "to wander patiently and tirelessly until the great unrest of her own heart had blazed new paths to timeless peace for all the world."

MRS. J. ROSS STEVENSON.  
Princeton, New Jersey.

**When Half-Gods Go.** By FRANK KINGDON. New York: The Abingdon Press. \$1.50.

IN this survey of the forces and motives impelling men in their search for full realization of their physical, intellectual, social, moral, and religious aspirations, it is always important to know what the influence of various mental disciplines has been. Doctor Kingdon has evaluated clearly the place our great interpreters have held in this respect. From many Old Testament worthies and fathers of the church, through Augustine to Wesley, have come new syntheses of former conceptions of God—each of which has been fuller and richer than the rest.

With skillful application of the Bergsonian and Hegelian theses, the author of *When Half-Gods Go* has indicated how the quest of man for full knowledge, appreciation, and understanding in the fields of history, art, philosophy, and science has been met and re-enforced by the creative, indwelling presence of God; the restlessness of the human spirit in its search for truth and satisfaction being impelled by the Divine Presence within. Thus whether it be the warm appreciation of art, the cold light of philosophy, or the development of history, the process of outgrowing and embodying new-found conceptions of God and life has steadily gone on.

Especially good are the pages dealing with those who see by an inward light—our poets and mystics who bring their



profoundest intuitions to the problems of God and his relationship to our human life.

This is a book to be read for its fine insights, its grasp of the progressive character of experience, its skillful phrasing in language at once vivid and non-technical, of the great resources the man of the spirit may find in the quest for God in the individual and social experience of the race. The pragmatic and instrumental character of all our disciplines is clearly brought out. The style is simple, graphic and swift, the intellectual footing is sure, and withal there is the moral lucidity and spiritual passion of a man who is deeply in earnest.

ROBERT WILLIAMS.

Ohio Northern University,  
Ada, Ohio.

**Methodism in American History.** By WILLIAM WARREN SWEET. New York: The Methodist Book Concern. \$3.00.

PROFESSOR SWEET has the excellent habit of making a book and its title match. His title here tells us in four words that he is not writing of that spirit, organization, movement called Methodism in the unity and limitations of its own inner organic development, but in its contacts and articulation with the people and institutions of a growing nation, of which it has been and is an essential part. The inspiration of his purpose might perhaps be expressed in the words of Daniel Webster which he quotes, words spoken at a crisis for Methodism in America midway in its career. In March, 1850, in debate in the Senate, Webster said, referring to the division of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which had taken place six years before: "I felt great concern, as that dispute went on, about the result. I was in hopes that the differences of opinion might be adjusted, because I looked on that religious denomi-

nation as one of the great props of religion and morals throughout the whole country from Maine to Georgia, and westward to our utmost westward boundary."

It is in his adherence to this wider inquiry and in his rich resources acquired in the studies which it has involved that Doctor Sweet has placed all students of the place of religion in the life of America under new obligations. Two or three illustrations must suffice. He leaves us the picture of the pioneer itinerant in the new western lands which Theodore Roosevelt has drawn in line and color ineffaceable, and corrects the early reports of inquirers like Samuel J. Mills, who stated in 1814-15 to the Massachusetts and Connecticut Missionary Societies that the Methodists were infrequently found at that time in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys and in Kentucky and Tennessee. Doctor Sweet adds the impressive fact that the peculiar organization of the Methodist itinerancy, even in the crude days of the pioneer settlers, spread a network of spiritual forces over the entire Middle West. Methodism from the beginning shared the life of the trail and the cabin.

In his treatment of the relation of Methodism to slavery, from the earliest days to 1844 and beyond, Doctor Sweet is frank, thorough, and judicial. It is a record often discussed, rarely without bias. A clear-cut account of what happened, what was said, what Methodism in both its large branches did to slavery and what slavery did to Methodism is a welcome contribution to the material for thought when all, as is practically true in these days, wish to see the truth without shadow and to do the right without flinching.

It may be that among the thesis writers—a source of authority, by the way, of whom Professor Sweet is not unaware—some one will be allured into accepting as a theme, *American Methodism in*



*Four Wars.* He would find good source material in this book in which the statements of the Church's attitude and action in the Revolution, in the War of 1812, in the Civil War, and in the World War are factual, restrained, balanced. One need hardly add that in the annalist is always seen and sometimes speaks the patriot.

It is possible that in a subject of such wide range, which perforce includes the results of earlier studies and must by reason of limitation of space rigidly resist the lure of expansion, the story at times may seem incomplete. Because, doubtless, of these conditions, less often than we could wish does Doctor Sweet interpret the facts which with such care he assembles. But this raises the question which has not yet been answered, namely: is the historian one who tells what he knows or one who also tells what he thinks about what he knows.

In any case, we may well take satisfaction in this effective record of most important phases of Methodist and of American history, and be grateful for the wise thoughts about them which all too infrequently the gifted author allows himself to express.

FRANK MASON NORTH.  
Madison, New Jersey.

### **Difficulties in Religious Thinking.**

By FRANK GLENN LANKARD. New York: The Abingdon Press. \$2.

DOCTOR LANKARD offers a very stimulating discussion of some of the difficulties which present-day young people face in religious thinking; a discussion which is prepared especially as a guide for leaders of these young people who may not have the time or facilities for "digging" so deeply into these questions as Doctor Lankard has. The book will be of real assistance to pastors; workers with young people, both those who are in college and those who are not; to those

who are charged with the preparation of materials for the use of young people.

As a background for this study Doctor Lankard made a questionnaire study of 333 college students in eight widely scattered institutions and of 224 younger adult laymen. These were asked to indicate, with regard to thirty-five items of religious difficulty, their own reaction varying through five steps from "No difficulty at all" to "Very great difficulty." The thirty-five items which formed the basis of the study had been selected "over a period of years" from contacts with various groups of students and others and from articles appearing in current literature. Thus these represented actual difficulties and not merely a theoretical list.

The tabulations of returns indicated that those items which constituted the greatest difficulty for the layman also, in general, constituted the greatest difficulty for the student.

The thirty-five items are not discussed as separate items; Doctor Lankard groups them and brings to bear on each group a rich background of historical knowledge and modern reading. These discussions are concerned with "The practical difficulties which revolve about the Christian spirit, or, rather, lack of it, in the lives of those who are the leaders in religion; the effectiveness of the Church and the timeliness of its message; the meaning of life; the fact of pain and suffering; the continuation of life and its status after death; the interpretation of science and the Bible; the meaning of God, and the interpretation of Jesus." This list of difficulties leads into wide ranges of thought; the writer has been quite skillful in bringing materials from many fields to bear upon the problem. One has the feeling at times that he has attempted to bring too many lines of thought to convergence and has been superficial in places.

Doctor Lankard writes always from a moderate position, seeking to set forth the strength of the older, more conservative position and also to show its weakness in meeting the thinking of men and women to-day. Perhaps his position may be summed up in this statement: "The old and time-honored intellectual statements about God are practically meaningless to the younger generation. Religion is as vital as ever, but it must not be presented in the terminology of yesterday."

All the chapters do not seem to be equally well written or of equal value. The discussion of "How may a modern man think about Jesus?" is exceedingly vital and stimulating. It will fail to satisfy many, especially those who are much concerned with older intellectual statements, but to many others it will open wide vistas of thought and make possible an entirely new appreciation of Jesus in his relationship to us to-day. The discussion of the Bible, while it offers nothing new, is well done and the summation of some of the advantages of the modern approach to an understanding of the Book will be helpful. One is impressed with the fact that Doctor Lankard has lost nothing of the tremendous religious values in the Bible by his own modern approach.

Leaders of youth will do well to read the book, if for no other reason than to be provoked to think about these problems in the religious thinking of youth and their responsibilities in the situation.

J. S. ARMENTROUT.

Presbyterian Board of Christian Education.

**The Other Spanish Christ.** By JOHN A. MACKAY. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$2.

DOCTOR MACKAY tells us that his book is a "pioneer attempt to deal with the religious problem of these [Hispanic] lands in its wholeness." There are many

books that deal with the problem from the standpoint of Roman Catholicism, and copious citations from these are made by Doctor Mackay. There are various books that deal with the question from the Protestant viewpoint. But he is right in saying that there is no other volume devoted entirely to the sweep of religious life beginning with the Roman Catholic dominance (the Spanish Christ), passing into the anticlerical and positivist movements and on to theosophy, spiritualism, Protestantism, and liberal Christianity (the other Spanish Christ). A volume that has just appeared in Spanish gives a quite similar message, written by Dr. John Orts Gonzalez, former literature secretary of the Committee on Co-operation in Latin America. Indeed it is significant that these two volumes appear simultaneously, both pointing out that far from the Reformation's being foreign to the spirit and psychology of Spain, that country received the reform with considerable enthusiasm, which was lost only because of extraordinary persecution of the leaders.

*The Other Spanish Christ* sweeps us through four centuries or more of religious experience, traced through the lives of literary and ecclesiastical leaders in Spain itself, the conquistadors who came to America for God, gold and glory, the flaming prophets of liberalism and the anticlericals of the nineteenth century, and finally the leaders of modern Protestantism. By means of brief biographical sketches of the representatives of all these periods and schools of thought we are carried along in an interesting way by charming, chaste, and elegant language, from one to another of the "mountain peaks" of the religious life in Spanish America.

Doctor Mackay's well-known fondness for the great Spaniard, Don Miguel de Unamuno, who "ranks among the few prophetic voices of our times," is shown throughout the book, which of

course means that those who do not accept Don Miguel's interpretations would be inclined also to differ with Doctor Mackay's in regard to Spain's overwhelming dominance of Latin American thought and spirit. If one were to criticize such an excellent treatment it would be that if it is intended to give a general view it is too largely based on the philosophical with too little of the sociological, too confident of what a few "aristocrats" in the literary world think rather than giving greater consideration to some of the more democratic and probably more American thinkers like Sarmiento, Agustin Alvarez, Arturo Capdevila of Argentina, J. Edwards Bello of Chile, and Moises Saenz of Mexico, as well as the large output of the "proletarian" group of to-day. There are a large number of students who believe that the Indian element will largely determine the future of several of the West Coast countries and that on the East Coast Spain has ceased to have any large influence, since these countries are developing their own and not a "Hispanic soul."

Doctor Mackay is fond of the word "ecumenical" and he practices this spirit in his appreciation of the good accomplished by such developments as theosophy and other spiritual movements whose rapid growth in South America demonstrates the people's hunger for religion.

This is a volume of literary charm and challenging philosophical penetration, which at the same time will be recognized by the friends of Doctor Mackay as something of a spiritual biography of the author from his days as a student in Madrid, where he became thoroughly imbued with the viewpoint of the Spanish intellectuals, on through his experience as a missionary teacher and lecturer in Latin American universities, up to the present, when he enters the secretaryship of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign

Missions in New York to help face the new day in Missions.

SAMUEL GUY INMAN.  
Executive Secretary of the Committee  
on Co-operation in Latin America,  
New York, N. Y.

**Moral Laws.** By EDGAR SHEFFIELD  
BRIGHTMAN. New York: The Ab-  
ingdon Press. \$2.50.

FOR fourteen years Professor Brightman has lent distinction to the Borden Parker Bowne chair of philosophy at Boston University. During this time he has been able to produce, in addition to his teaching and lecturing, seven notable volumes. The two immediately preceding the present one deal with *The Problem of God* and *The Finding of God*. The appearance of a new volume from the fertile pen of Doctor Brightman is an important event in the personalistic philosophical tradition so sturdily advocated in this country by Doctor Bowne. The philosophy of personalism is in the arena to stay against both naturalism and realism.

*Moral Laws* is the harvest of a Sabbatical year in Germany. It is a contribution to ethics as a science, "a normative science of ideal principles." It is an attempt to discover and formulate the universal moral laws. "The central idea of the book is that the moral life is a rational life." Goodness is held to be more than conventional, more than social customs, more than the satisfaction of natural needs; it is actually nothing less than "a control of our social behavior and our instinctive tendencies by rational laws."

The novelty of the discussion is not so much in its content as in its mode of presentation. The moral laws are formulated in eleven propositions. To each a chapter is devoted in exposition and defense. There are four introductory chapters which show that ethics is a

normative science; that there are civil, religious, natural and logical, as well as moral, laws; that experience provides the data of ethics; and that the moral laws constitute a system. There is a final chapter which shows the autonomy of the moral law: "... the influence of metaphysics does not affect the principles of the Moral Laws" (p. 275). However, the author concludes: "It seems to the present writer that only an idealistic philosophy of some sort can give an adequate and coherent interpretation of the personalistic data and laws of ethics" (p. 287).

The moral code as formulated by Doctor Brightman contains these eleven laws:

#### I. The Formal Laws

1. The Logical Law: *All persons ought to will logically.*
2. The Law of Autonomy: *Self-imposed ideals are imperative.*

#### II. The Axiological Laws (dealing with values)

3. The Axiological Law: *All persons ought to choose values which are self-consistent, harmonious, and coherent.*
4. The Law of Consequences: *Choose with a view to the long run, not merely the present act.*
5. The Law of the Best Possible: *All persons ought to will the best possible values in every situation.*
6. The Law of Specification: *All persons ought, in any given situation, to develop the value or values specifically relevant.*
7. The Law of the Most Inclusive End: *All persons ought to choose a coherent life in which the widest possible range of value is realized.*
8. The Law of Ideal Control: *All persons ought to control their empirical values by ideal values.*

#### III. The Personalistic Laws

9. The Law of Individualism: *Each person ought to realize in his own experience the maximum value of which he is capable in harmony with moral law.*
10. The Law of Altruism: *Each person ought to respect all other persons as ends in themselves.*
11. The Law of the Ideal of Personality: *Judge and guide all acts by an ideal of personality.*

The whole argument is lucidly and strongly presented. There is appended a brief outline of the history of ethics. Bibliographies are given at the end of the chapters and also at the end of the volume. An index closes the whole. Here is a useful and valuable text for classes in ethics written by a master in his field.

The author accomplishes his scientific end finely. What humanity needs just now is the will to be rational, the disposition to do as well as one knows, and to reflect on the best thing to do. This is a problem, however, not of ethics but of moral education. If any man willeth to do the right thing, Brightman will help him find the right thing to do.

HERMAN H. HORNE.

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New York University,  
New York, N. Y.

#### A History of Christian Thought. By

ARTHUR CUSHMAN MCGIFFERT.  
Vol. II: The West from Tertulian to Erasmus. New York:  
Charles Scribner's Son. \$3.00.

The second volume of Dr. McGiffert's review of Christian Thought completes a most readable and interesting series of vistas into the thought of Christendom up to the eve of the Reformation. Except for a few chapters dealing with such subjects as "The Sacraments," "The Church and the Papacy,"

"The Doctrine of the Trinity," "The Doctrine of the Person of Christ," and "The Nicene Council and After," the method in these two volumes is a semi-popular analysis of the life and teachings of those leaders, in an era or locality, whom the author believes to be typical. Ample references to sources are made in footnotes, and a well selected bibliography for each chapter has been added at the end of both volumes. Doctor McGiffert possesses the happy faculty of expressing in a simple, clear style what would otherwise be obtruse, involved, and obscure. In this volume he handles the life and teachings of Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine, Anselm, and Thomas Aquinas with special clearness. The full implications of the teachings of Abelard, the Pelagians, and the Mystics for later years, and for this present day, are not set forth.

For general scholarly reading these two volumes have much to be praised. For text book purposes there seems to be much that is lacking. The author explains that he had expected that the whole would be included in one volume, hence he chose his materials accordingly. But within the compass of nearly eight hundred pages it would have added greatly, for teaching purposes, if there were brief notations of the lives and writings of the many omitted. In a history of Christian Thought very much more should have been made of the conflicting schools of Antioch and Alexandria, which for at least three hundred years struggled for ascendancy. Jerome's influence on later thought through his Vulgate ought certainly to have had more adequate treatment. Neo-Platonism, Manicheism, Arianism, and their by-products are not set forth clearly. We miss clear cut paragraph headings and chapter outlines. Why is it that we cannot have in the realm of theology pedagogically correct text books such as now appear in the so-called secular field?

These observations are made in the most sympathetic spirit. Altogether, Dr. McGiffert's two volume History is the best treatise now available in English.

GAIVUS J. SLOSSER.

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

### **Contemporary Idealism in America.**

Edited by CLIFFORD BARRETT.  
New York: Macmillan Co. \$2.00.

This co-operative volume written by eleven well known American philosophers, purporting to set forth the essential doctrines of contemporary idealism, is a book of considerable importance. It does for American idealism what *The New Realism* (Macmillan, 1912) and *Essays in Critical Realism* (Macmillan, 1920) did earlier for the respective realistic schools of thought. In a sense it constitutes an answer to the concerted criticisms of these earlier volumes. The *New Realism*, particularly, had undertaken to combat idealism by charging it with having made unjustifiable capital out of what Perry called "the ego-centric predicament." To those who know idealism only from realistic critics, a good deal of surprise is in store. For example, the view that idealism involves the doctrine that the world of nature does not really exist anywhere but in the mind of the observer is most determinedly rejected by all these writers. All attempts, therefore, to overthrow idealism by attacking subjective idealism must henceforth be considered as outmoded. No realist could maintain more strongly than the writers of this volume that the realm of nature is not dependent for its existence upon the finite knower. On the whole, the book is irenic in deliberate tendency. Pragmatists and realists are quoted with approval whenever possible, even to the extent of classifying, as Hoernlé does, Whitehead and Dewey as implicit idealists. The one



declared opponent of idealism is reductionistic naturalism or materialism. Professor Bakewell's dialectic analysis of Watsonian behaviorism is richly amusing in its *reductio ad absurdum*. Watson's own thinking on his own theory turns out to be "just Watson's way of working his muscles."

It is of interest to ask what idealism regards as central. There is substantial agreement among these representative writers that, although the mind (or soul or self or person) does not create the external world, mind has a privileged position in it. Mind or soul or self or personality is held to constitute the best key to a knowledge of reality. Any explanation of reality after the analogy of material and mechanical objects and processes is rejected with determination. Most of them, at least, would also agree that there is "some mental life at the core of reality." (Urban, p. 106.) This statement, of course, must be taken with caution because it is here that the chief differences among idealists themselves appear. Some no doubt would tend to embrace a kind of absolute idealism of a monistic nature with no fear even of Hegel (e. g. Urban), whereas, others (Leighton and Brightman especially) in their interest in safeguarding the significance of the finite self would emphasize idealistic pluralism. Agreement would likewise be found in the emphasis on the importance of value. And it is here that modern idealism probably shows its closest affinities with pragmatism. But idealism has a strong tendency to find in value something that has more than human significance; value, for idealism, is embedded in reality itself. Another point on which all writers agree is that philosophy must not rest content with any other but a view of the whole. Atomistic views are always rejected in favor of organic and functional attitudes. For that reason, emergent evolution and Gestalt

psychology are for the most part viewed with friendly interest.

It is impossible in a brief review to do justice to the various contributors to this volume. Not all of the essays show a direct bearing upon idealism. A few seem to have been written for another purpose than that of a presentation of the idealistic attitude. All, however, are instructive. Professor Palmer presents a short and intimate biography of Josiah Royce. The Editor in a good introductory chapter attempts a survey of the essential doctrines of idealism. The most readable essay and one of the most important, written with the grace and verve his students came to value, is contributed by Professor Bakewell. Professor Hocking, taking his point of departure from Royce, undertakes to rehabilitate the ontological argument, refining it, however, and giving it a wider than the traditional application. G. Watts Cunningham gives a most careful preliminary analysis of what is involved in the meaning-situation. Professor Urban's article emphasizing the supreme importance of value for philosophy and idealism is likewise one of the more important chapters from the standpoint of revealing what is central in modern idealism. Professor Leighton, likewise a great defender of value, stresses in addition the importance of the individual, and rejects with considerable feeling the doctrine of the "all-devouring" and "all-digesting Absolute" which he calls "little short of nonsense" and "an inconceivable monster." His essay and that of Professor Boodin on God and the cosmic structure present more cosmogony than any other. Professor Brightman gives an informative article on the idealistic view of the finite self. Professor Tsanoff extends his well known gradational theory to the whole field of value. Professor Hendel examines the meaning of obligation in the history of modern political theory.



On laying down this volume one has distinctly the feeling that the points which unite present day philosophers, whether realistic or idealistic, are vastly more important than those which divide them. Any one who wishes to understand the vitality of classical idealism as well as its flexible adaptability to modern demands cannot afford to ignore this book.

CORNELIUS KRUSE.

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**The Living Word in a Changing World.** By WILLIAM THEOPHILUS DAVISON. London: The Epworth Press. \$2.00.

THOSE who are troubled about the bearing of science and critical scholarship upon Christianity could hardly find a more timely and helpful volume than this, for which we are indebted to Doctor Davison. He is a remarkable example of the thoroughly accomplished teacher and minister who has not relinquished his faith in the "Great Tradition," nor his keen and comprehensive interest in the many-sided life of the world to-day.

The names of men eminent in theology, philosophy, ethics, and science occur in this book, and their theories are submitted to the critical examination which we have been taught to expect from its distinguished author. Throughout its pages the reader is refreshed and enlightened by comments which reveal the alert and receptive mind of one who for many years has thoroughly understood and carefully pondered the problems he discusses. Doctor Davison's incisive treatment of some humanistic speculations is a case in point. The effort made to equate God with "the personality producing activities of the

cosmos" should be noted by all who are interested in this issue.

But the volume is far more than a disconcerting analysis of some theological perversions. Doctor Davison has a faith which is constructive and illuminating, and he gives sound reasons for it. He clearly understands the amazing changes which characterize the modern age and welcomes the healthy developments those changes have stimulated. But "the Living Word" abides at the heart of this constant flux. That "Word" is far more than the literary forms it assumes in the Scriptures, and nothing less than God's revelation of himself to man, of which the Bible is a sure witness.

All Divine realities are included in its function and scope, and our Lord is their Incarnation. The Holy Spirit enforces the significance of the Incarnation in the hearts of men, and the Church proclaims Christ's redemptive mission to them. Christian experience supports this universal embassy of the New Testament Gospel, which is what it has been from the beginning, the basis of mankind's Godward progress for the future.

One relishes this fine and authoritative book the more because it conserves the essentials of Christianity's philosophy of life, both here and hereafter, while properly indifferent to mere platitude and shibboleth. It maintains that splendid heritage of inspiring and saving truths which Saint Paul emphasizes. They have built up God's causes in the past, and they will have to be safeguarded if the Church is to fulfill the purposes of her Lord. Her ability to "go into all the world and make disciples of all the nations" depends on her allegiance to the basic verities which Doctor Davison has so lucidly defined and expounded in his truly worth-while volume.

S. PARKES CADMAN.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

## Bookish Brevities

"Would you believe it, my publishers only printed one advertisement of the *Carol* before Christmas—my poor little book will never be heard of." The writer was Charles Dickens and the year 1843.

After addressing audiences in China as large as those he is accustomed to in India, the deservedly popular author, Stanley Jones, is returning with his family for a furlough in America. Measured by the flood of applications for his services, Stanley Jones has become the most sought for speaker on religion.

Evidence of the extravagance of the era which is expiring is to be found in unexpected quarters. Doctor Vollbehr presented an Austrian monastery with \$375,000, for which he received the Gutenberg Bible. For it and some three thousand manuscripts of mid-Europe in the beginning of the sixteenth century, Congress gave to Doctor Vollbehr \$1,500,000.

Genuine personal and social religion have been much more closely and constantly related than the partisans of either are wont to recognize. There is little more abuse of personal religion as an escape from social obligations than there is of abuse of social radicalism by claiming it as a shelter from the consequences of professional failure. That apostle of practical Christianity, Washington Gladden, wrote "In peace that only thou can'st give, With thee, O Master, let me live." Samuel Chadwick, who, out of his own practice and experience, wrote "The Path of Prayer," said, "I put my conversion as a lad into the polish on my father's shoes." Thousands owe the ele-

vation of their everyday lives to that intense evangelist.

"Of fate and chance and change in human life

High actions and high passions best describing."

Such is the desirable content of books in the thought of John Milton.

Promiscuity, seductions, abortions, Lesbianism, de-characterize the best selling novel of the day. It should be said that these lurid pictures are a bit relieved by a pungent indictment of the abominations of prison life.

It is a truism that with gratifying exceptions the size of its sale is no measurement of the value of a book. Six religious books appear in the one hundred books of non-fiction of largest sale in the decade of 1921-1932. These are Papini's *Life of Christ*, Jones' *The Christ of the Indian Road*, Barton's *The Man Nobody Knows*, *The Book Nobody Knows*, and Browne's *This Believing World*. Could the difference between the value of books in merit and in the market be more glaring? Few discriminating readers would be found to have more than two of this list upon their library shelves.

A notable conference on the City and the Church was held in Chicago recently. In the discussions it developed that there are obtainable several scientific studies of factual material setting forth the social changes which are tangling and depleting church life. It came out also that these new conditions are compelling pastors to devote more of their time to personal counselling in which they may be guided by valuable books written by physicians, sociologists, psychiatrists, and specially

trained pastors. Furthermore, it came to be accepted that in dealing with these crowding and chaotic conditions, ministers are tempted to disregard the cultivation of their own lives until they become too superficial and resourceless to be stimulating. As Dr. Jesse Halsey outlined in the Winter number of *RELIGION IN LIFE*, numerous books have been prepared to aid in periods of prayer and meditation for the refreshment of the inner life. It was evidenced that many whose responsibilities charge them with city leadership scarcely knew that such books exist.

Two methods of education which a few years ago promised to become most popular are distinctly in decline.

One is the questionnaire to obtain first hand information. It has some value in avoiding abstractions and generalizations. That value is easily exaggerated. For a clever framer of the questions can suggest the answers. Again, the questions may be directed toward those who are one-sided. Relatively few are they whose opinions extend far beyond their prejudices. Thus it comes that many statistics which have a reputation for being dispassionate are quite distant from useful truth.

The other is the forum, which some twenty years ago sprang up in many quarters of the country, often under church influence. It was claimed that it peculiarly belongs to a democracy in affording an opportunity for free discussions through which people can form their own opinions. It has eventuated that it can only be led successfully by a strong leader who by reason of his strength usually has compelling convictions which are restrainless. Furthermore, the time is likely to be occupied by those who speak in ignorance of, or who ask questions about, what is commonplace to the well-informed in the

group. Consequently in most forums there is little more freedom of thought or substantiation of opinion than is found in the formulated presentations they were designed to displace.

In the death of John Galsworthy literature lost one of its noblest contemporary representatives. The dignity and artistry which distinguished his writing shone through his diffidence upon the lecture platform. His feeling for the color, rhythm, strength, and precision of words was an inborn advantage which he early determined should not be vitiated by any technical education, which he believed to be a destroyer of imagination.

Galsworthy had a social conscience which irritated Max Beerbohm into saying unfairly, that he sold his birthright for a pot of message. He was a lover of animals, a detester of avarice, and an unrelenting hater of war. He permitted few to know that during the war he worked incognito as a *masseur* in a French military hospital.

As the writings of Dickens inaugurated Children's Aid Societies and those of Tolstoy disintegrated Czaristic tyrannies, as the *San Michele* of Axel Munthe made a bird sanctuary of the island of Capri, so John Galsworthy's play *Justice* stimulated prison reform and his *Strife* reconciled labor and capital.

Painstakingly, he read superior poetry and prose to develop his style. For the same purpose he can be read. Can any one be well read who knows not his intriguing *Forsyte Saga*?

Criticism must come into more regard in America as the standards of literature advance. Taine and Sainte-Beuve, Coleridge and Arnold are names of older lands. Not yet have we produced a George Saintsbury. Saintsbury, who died in January, could have been a so-called

creative writer. He had ideas and principles and an individual style capable of conveying his meaning completely. As a critic he was more distinguished. He had read extensively in several languages and over many centuries. Without immodesty he could assert, "I have never given a second-hand opinion on any book or writer." If his imperial detachment abstracted him from the social struggle of his times it permitted him an impartiality undeviated by any popular constraint. Over a writing career of nearly sixty years he assisted multitudes to avail themselves of the best by his quite unerring grading of literature as first rate through to fifth rate.

Perhaps it is more difficult for a reviewer of religious books to be detached. The Oxford University Press is publishing a volume of reviews of that redoubtable defender of orthodoxy, Dr. B. B. Warfield. The book is well named *Critical Reviews*.

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"My knowledge is pessimistic but my willing and hoping are optimistic." So writes Albert Schweitzer in his new book, *Out of My Life and Thought*. He speaks of two perceptions which cast

their shadows over his existence. One is the realization that the world is inexplicably mysterious and full of suffering, the other that this is a period of spiritual decadence. He is in complete disagreement with the prevalent disdain for and mistrust of thinking. He holds that there should be more lamentation because thinking seems to be unequal to its task. Man conceals that he has no longer any spiritual self-confidence. The city of truth cannot be built upon the swampy ground of skepticism. Not less strong than the will to truth must be the will to sincerity which is the foundation of the spiritual life. Reverence for life he makes central in his thinking. Mystical intuition can help but little, he believes, because its ethical content is too slight and within it imagination can be too active. Christianity has need of thought that it may come to the consciousness of its real self. The essential element in Christianity is that it is only through love we can attain to communion with God. "I am devoted to Christianity in deep affection and I dedicate myself anew to making man less shallow and morally better by making them think." Thus writes one of the greatest of living men.

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